



Hello, Hamilton County

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E-News for Hamilton County Residents and Staff

December 2005



Crime Laboratory Celebrates Ten Years of DNA Analyses

Submitted by Bill Dean, Crime Lab Director

CSI it's not, but effective it is. The year 2005 marks a full decade that the Coroner's Crime Laboratory has provided DNA analyses for Hamilton County criminal investigators. Plans to upgrade the serology section to forensic DNA work began when Dr. Frank Cleveland was Coroner. In 1994, the Restriction Fragment Length Polymorphism procedure was the standard DNA analysis method. Dr. Cleveland was understandably reluctant to begin DNA analysis because at that time the process involved handling radioactive isotopes and normally required a Ph.D. staff member.

By the time Dr. Carl Parrott took over as Coroner, a simplified approach known as Polymerase Chain Reaction was available. In this method, a strip of chemical "dots" reacted to the sample extract. The serologists convinced Dr. Parrott that the method was within the capabilities of the laboratory. Amy Harlukowicz and Joan Burke began training in 1995 before ordering the necessary supplies and equipment. DNA analyses commenced soon thereafter and the Lillian Perkins homicide case became one of the first major cases the section processed.

With the aid of federal grants in 1999, the laboratory took the next step of purchasing a capillary electrophoresis DNA analyzer. Upgrading to the Short Tandem Repeat analytical method allowed the crime laboratory to participate in the national DNA database known as CODIS. To date the laboratory has had over 200 CODIS "hits." Some "hits" link DNA profiles from two or more crimes. Others point to a specific convicted offender whose profile was added to the database when he entered the penitentiary. CODIS has enabled Hamilton County police departments to solve crimes that otherwise would remain mysteries.

Dr. O'dell Owens, the current Coroner, is insuring the DNA section continues to improve. This year he secured authorization to hire a much-needed third analyst. Tracy Cotterman recently joined the staff from the Baltimore Police Department. In addition, a new \$150,000 federal grant in 2006 will permit installation of faster, more reliable instrumentation. The current serologists, Joan Burke, Tracy Cotterman and Bill Harry continue the tradition of working closely with local investigators to process crime scene evidence and provide expert courtroom testimony. Their diligent efforts will insure the DNA section functions well into the next decade.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

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Yardwaste recycling drop-off sites closing for the season

Jeff Aluotto, Program Manager

The county's Solid Waste Management District's yardwaste recycling drop-off sites closed November 27. These sites provided, free to county residents, will re-open from January 7, 2006 through January 14, 2006. **During this time, the sites will be open on Saturdays only from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

The sites are located at the following locations:

East: Turpin Farm
3295 Turpin Lane (off Rt. 32) in Anderson Township

West: Kuliga Park
6717 Bridgetown Road in Green Township

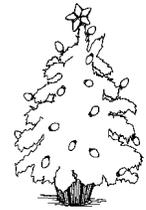
North: Rumpke Sanitary Landfill, Strubble Road and Colerain Avenue in Colerain Township

Drop-off sites accept items such as leaves, grass clippings, brush, garden waste, tree trunks, Christmas trees, and prunings from trees and shrubs.

To learn more about how to manage your yardwaste at home, request a free *Yardwaste at Home Handbook* from the Solid Waste Management District by calling the Yardwaste and Composting Hotline at 946.7755, or visit www.hcdoes.org.

Be sure to check the website for the announcement of the re-opening of the yardwaste sites in early spring, 2006.

According to the National Christmas Tree Association, Americans buy 27.1 million live Christmas trees each year; 25 percent are from the nation's 5,000 tree farms that let you choose and cut your own.



GOOD NEWS

Two members of County Personnel received professional recognition.

- Jessica Hayes received the Professional in Human Resources (PHR) award.
- Kim Serra received the Senior Professional in Human Resources (PHR) award.

John Hester, Building Inspections, was installed as President of the Southwestern Ohio Building Officials Association.

Cory Chadwick, Department of Environmental Services, is doing well following surgery and is scheduled to return to work in January.

Mini grants available

Submitted by Holly Utrata-Halcomb, Soil & Water District Administrator

The Storm Water District was formed in March 2003, to address the county's water quality issues. Membership includes 44 of 48 jurisdictions in the county.

One of the strategies is to coordinate with local watershed groups and nonprofit environmental organizations for education and outreach activities/projects to increase the knowledge and purpose of the Storm Water District and non-point source pollution prevention. Organizations and watershed groups with a 501-C3 status, as well as local jurisdictions may apply. A total of \$20,000 is available for projects under this grant. Individual project awards ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 will be considered for funding.

Deadline for submission of grants is Monday, March 20, 2006. Visit <http://www.hamilton-co.org/stormwater/communications.htm>, or call Brian Bohl at 772.7645 for more information.

Every mile is two in winter.
~George Herbert

MSD receives management honors

The Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) has been selected to receive national honors for management excellence by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA). MSD is one of only seven utilities in the country to be chosen for the award.

NACWA's *Excellence in Management Recognition Program* honors wastewater utilities that have implemented progressive management techniques that successfully address organizational challenges. MSD is being recognized for its significant efforts toward improved efficiency and effectiveness. While MSD has received many awards for wastewater treatment excellence, this is the first time its management strategies have received national accolades.

"Improving management practices is a priority outlined in MSD's Strategic Plan, and NACWA's recognition of our efforts validates our program," stated MSD Director Bob Campbell. "In order to provide customers the quality service they expect and deserve, we must optimize our business processes and staff performances in the same way any other major organization would, public or private. Our staff has been working diligently on this issue, and should be pleased with the progress being made."

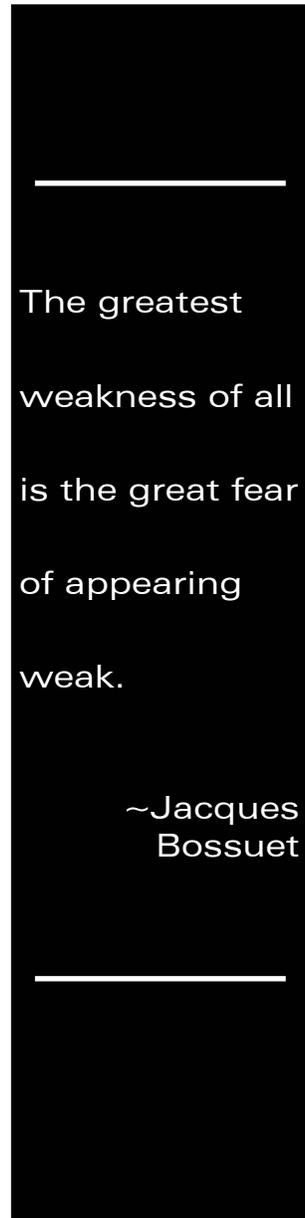
A key component of MSD's management success has been its recent focus on business and people processes, in addition to technical and operational issues. Using stakeholder involvement, employee partici-

pation and accountability, and performance measurements as cornerstones of its program, MSD has made great strides in the areas of strategic planning, customer service and the development or proactive partnerships to address the long-term regulatory challenges facing the community.

"MSD truly embodies the spirit of NACWA's *Excellence in Management Program*. It is an honor and an inspiration to showcase the achievements and commitment of our nation's public wastewater utilities to America's waters," said Ken Kirk, NACWA's Executive Director.

NACWA is a nationally-recognized leader in environmental policy development and a sought-after technical resource on water quality and ecosystem protection issues. Members of the national trade association serve the majority of the severed communities in the United States, and collectively treat and reclaim over 18 billion of wastewater every day. MSD has been a member of NACWA since 1990.

Every day, the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati manages the effective collection and treatment of more than 200 million gallons of wastewater and actively maintains 3,000 miles of sanitary and combined sewers that run through the 49 municipalities and townships of Hamilton County. Owned by Hamilton County and operated by the City of Cincinnati, MSD is committed to continually maintaining and improving its wastewater collection and treatment systems for the betterment of both public and environmental health.



The greatest weakness of all is the great fear of appearing weak.

~Jacques Bossuet

Storm drain labeling

Submitted by Holly Utrata-Halcomb, Soil & Water District Administrator

This fall, Brownie and Girl Scout troops have actively been involved in helping the Soil & Water District spread the clean water message. The troops have reached over 600 residents through the distribution of door hangers and the labeling of storm drains.

Brown Troop #8233, led by Lora Alberto, helped provide information on pollution prevention techniques to businesses and property owners of Greenhills in October.

In November, Girl Scouts from several troops were organized by Dondi Tate to label storm drains in the Westwood area of Cincinnati. Storm drain labeling projects, such as these are important as the District strives to improve water quality in the Winton Lake and West Fork Mill Creek Basin (Greenhills drainage), as well as the Muddy Creek and lower Mill Creek basin (Westwood drainage).

In addition to efforts to stop pollution at its source, Amberley Village residents conducted a habitat evaluation along several segments of a French Park tributary to the Mill Creek.

Following a District presentation in October, residents documented the existing conditions of the stream channel in order to better understand current water quality issues and to provide baseline data of future evaluations.

Cultural Diversity Events and Training at JFS

Submitted by Ogbazgy A. Asmerom

The Cultural Initiatives Committee of Job and Family Services recently organized a full month of events, activities, and trainings on different topics dealing with cultural diversity issues, using the theme, *Understanding Diversity Makes A Difference!*



Training

Throughout the month, several trainings were offered:

- Understanding people with different lifestyles
- Diversity in the workplace
- Limited English Proficiency
- Domestic violence by an intimate partner
- The effects of domestic violence on children

Several trainers from the community were invited to participate in the training, including,

- The Inclusion Network,
- AVOAC Coalition
- Talbert House
- YWCA of Greater Cincinnati

Each trainer presented helpful pointers and ideas on the process of understanding and maintaining a diverse workforce, and an inclusive environment. According to the trainers of Inclusion Network, there are more than 43 million Americans with various disabilities who need to be portrayed realistically and spoken to

respectfully. Thus, we need to avoid using the term “disabled people,” and begin using the term “people with disabilities.” By doing so, we put the person first, then the disability. Victoria Brooks stressed the point that people with different lifestyles must be respected for the choice they make, and not face discrimination and social stigma which is based on fear and false premises of stereotypes.

Theresa Singleton and her staff from the YWCA, and Kelly Pitocco of Talbert House demonstrated that domestic violence is based on power and control.

People who have the need to control and manipulate others are the prime candidates who do commit domestic violence. Domestic violence hurts every member of the affected family. The most vulnerable are children. Domestic violence is a learned behavior that needs to be stopped.

JFS staff also served as trainers. Julian Wagner and Ogbazgy Asmerom trained staff on Limited English Proficiency and the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Several staff members in various units attended the training presentations.

Dessert tasting

In addition to training, JFS held an international dessert tasting event. Various desserts were served from several ethnic groups, and staff members enjoyed the samplings.

Coordinating the events

Julian Wagner, Tom Ashbrock, Andrea Brooks (El-Azzouzi), and Terri Holley coordinated registration and the issuance of training certificates. Gaja Karyala, Sabrina Calloway, Barbara Maloney, Regina Davis, Jackie Twyman, Wanda

Lewis, Pat Hager, Julian Wagner and Tara Tucker coordinated the delivery and authenticity of ethnic foods and desserts. Robert Harper, Pat Hager, Shelette Richardson and Travina Hogue coordinated shuttle service between the Alms and Doepke and Taft locations. Tara Tucker, Kim Williams, and Mike Boehmer did an excellent job in disseminating information. Julia Wager, Co-Chairperson, spent a lot of time making sure everything was going according to the plan. Beverly Donald assisted in making sure the terms of the contracts negotiated with outside vendors were according to the county's protocol.

Taste of Nations

The *Understanding Diversity Makes A Difference* finale was the Taste of Nations. American, Chinese, Eritrean, French, German, Greek, Irish/Scottish, Jamaican, Japanese, Jewish, Italian, Mexican, and Thai was prepared by local ethnic restaurants. Many JFS employees joined the celebration and expressed an appreciation for cultural diversity, as they enjoyed the various ethnic dishes.

Entertainment

The Sheriff's Department's Pipe and Drum Corps provided musical entertainment during the celebration of diversity.



Your Health & Wellness

Stave off Alzheimer's: Five stay-smart strategies

By Kim Pennekamp

So you've misplaced your house keys. Is it an early sign of Alzheimer's? About 4.5 million Americans suffer from the mind-robbing disease, and the numbers are growing. Discover five lifestyle changes that you can make today to strengthen your cognitive reserve.

Get your vitamins

Certain vitamins may help to slow or prevent the onset of Alzheimer's. Take at least 300 IU of vitamin E a day. Also increase your intake of the B vitamin folate, which is found in bananas, oranges, leafy green vegetables, asparagus, broccoli, liver and many types of beans and peas.

Eat your fish

A diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids may protect the brain from Alzheimer's. Eat more fatty fish such as salmon, halibut, sardines and tuna, and shop for omega-3 enriched eggs. If you can't get enough fish into your diet, consider taking at least 1 gram a day of a fish oil supplement.

Stay physically fit

Get blood pumping to your brain! A regular exercise regimen will increase your mental agility and alertness, and will reduce Alzheimer's risk factors, such as high blood pressure and hardening of the arteries. And your workout needn't be strenuous to be effective. Even moderately paced walking can improve your mental functioning.

Challenge your mind

Push your brain to move in new directions. Read. Do a crossword. Assemble a jigsaw puzzle. Learn to play an instrument or to speak another language. Take an art class. Whatever activities you choose, continually strive to strengthen less-used neural pathways.

Feel the love

A recent study found that lab rats that lived in groups of 12 had more thickening of the cortex (hence, fitter brains) than rats that lived alone. Also, when the rats were cuddled by researchers, instead of just being picked up by the tail, the rats lived significantly longer.

The conclusion

Staying socially active may help your mind perform at its best. So connect with friends and family and give someone a hug!

Source: ThirdAge Newsletter, Dec. edition

Spend Less

on your prescriptions

Introducing the Hamilton County
Prescription Discount Card

Free Enrollment for Hamilton County Residents

- FREE Enrollment
- Average savings of 20%
- No age requirements — you do NOT need to be a Medicare beneficiary to enroll
- No income requirements
- Family coverage
- Use it anytime your prescription is not covered by insurance



To find out how you can get a card, call 946-RxHC (946-7942) or visit www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov.

Almost all large chain pharmacies and many independent pharmacies are participating.

- Over 57,000 participating retail pharmacies nationwide.
- Eight out of 10 retail pharmacies participate in the program.

Check at your local pharmacy.

The prescription discount card program is offered through a joint effort of Hamilton County and the National Association of Counties (NACo).

Cardholders: Call toll free 1-877-321-2652 for information.

Pharmacist: The PCN, RxGRP, and full member ID must be submitted online to process claims for this program. For information call 1-800-364-6331.

This plan is not insurance.

Discounts only available at participating pharmacies.

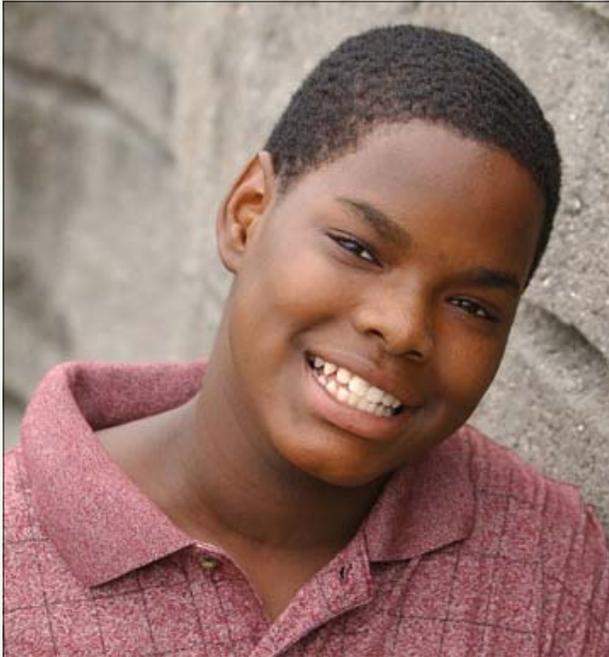
"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

~Maya Angelou, Poet and Author

Adoption

For Information Call 513.632.6366

Anthony
born: July 1991



Charming and helpful are the words that come to mind when thinking about Anthony. He is an intelligent, bold, yet courteous young man who does well in school and particularly enjoys math. He likes to solve new problems, is good at assembling things like model cars and wheel-chairs, and — not surprisingly — would like to be a computer technician when he grows up.

Anthony is active and likes to play running back in football and point guard in basketball. Typical of most teens his age, he also likes to listen to hip-hop, play video games, play at the park, or go to the mall. Other ways this respectful, pleasant boy spends his time include reading poetry, playing checkers or chess, and watching television.

A calm family environment where Anthony is the youngest sibling would be an ideal situation. He needs a strong female role model who can help him learn to express his emotions appropriately, make positive choices, and be responsible for his choices and decisions. Anthony is academically on-target, and will need support in his ongoing therapy and individualized behavior program at school.

Help enrich the life of a child in need.

Dear Prospective Adoptive Parent:

Thank you for your interest in adoption. Right now, our agency has more than 100 local children waiting to be adopted.

The majority of children available for adoption through Hamilton County Children's Services are African American, over the age of six or part of a sibling group. All of our children have been abused or neglected or were at risk of abuse or neglect. Currently, they are being cared for by foster parents or live in a group facility.

Despite their troubled lives, most of our children laugh and play like other children. They have favorite toys, games and friends. Each one of them has hopes and dreams. For the most part they are normal children but they have not led normal lives. Our children need one or more committed adults who are willing and able to provide a stable, nurturing and loving home.

"Adoption is forever." Adoption of a child through Hamilton County Children's Services is for committed adults willing to help traumatized children cope with their emotions. Adoptive parents must be willing to understand and support a child's attachment to his or her birth family and help that child stay in touch with his or her siblings. If you decide to adopt one of our children, you'll find there are few things in life more challenging or more rewarding. Adoption can not only change a child's life, it can change yours.

As a public agency, Hamilton County Children's Services can help your family throughout the entire adoption process. We provide a full range of adoption services from training to finalization. In addition, support programs and services are available to our families after finalization. If you choose to adopt a child through our agency, the total cost to you is typically under \$200.

The enclosed information is designed to give you a better understanding of adoption. We've included an overview of the process, more information about the children available for adoption and the basic requirements necessary to be an adoptive parent. We hope this information helps you decide whether you are ready to take the next step in the adoption process.

If you are ready to move forward, call 632-6366 and register for the next Open House. Register today. Our children are waiting.

Hamilton County Children's Services
Adoption and Foster Care Unit

Hope in Heels Award Luncheon

Hope in Heels, founded in 2005, is committed to making a positive impact on the victim services industry, by providing support and recognition to outstanding individuals and organizations working with victims of violent crime. Hope in Heels promotes collaboration, education and understanding in the field of victim services and criminal justice, and strives to increase awareness about the level of dedication among those in the field.

On December 2, the Hope in Heels Foundation presented the First Annual Hope in Heels Awards to four outstanding individuals. Each honoree was recognized for excellence in their field while working with victims of violent crimes and their reputation for being sensitive, consistent, creative and determined in doing so.

Sue Moore was presented the Hope in Heels award as a **Job and Family Services** intake worker.

James Butler and **Mandy Billhiner** were presented awards as assistant prosecutor and victim’s advocate in the county’s **Prosecutor’s Office**.

Congratulations to Sue, James, and Mandy.

Holiday Hoxworth Blood Drive

During the holidays, local blood donations do not keep pace with blood usage.

That is why it is so important that healthy individuals donate blood regularly to insure that there will always be an adequate blood supply for those in need.

So, if you are able, please take a few minutes to give a gift that could save a life — consider donating blood at our one-day holiday Hoxworth Blood Drive.

Hoxworth mobile vans will be parked in front of the following county sites on **Friday, December 16:**

Job & Family Services
222 E. Central Parkway
(Alms & Doepke Building)
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Job & Family Services
237 William Howard Taft
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

County Administration Building
138 E. Court Street
9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Taft Law Center
230 East Ninth Street
9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

- One in four of us will be the recipient of a blood transfusion in our lifetime.
- Locally, we need 350 individuals to step up and donate each day in order to maintain an adequate blood supply.
- Despite the increasing need for donors, Greater Cincinnati and the nation struggle with the reality that only 5% of the population donates blood.
- Donating blood is safe and easy. It is absolutely impossible to contract AIDS or any other infectious disease from donating blood.
- You receive FREE juice, snacks, and a t-shirt afterwards!

GOOD NEWS

The county’s **Solid Waste Management District** received the *Iron Eyes Cody Award*.

Proctor and Gamble, Rumpke Recycling, WKRC Channel 12 and the county’s Solid Waste Management District are four diverse organizations that do not seem similar in many respects. However, on Tuesday, November 15, the District was awarded the 2005 *Iron Eyes Cody Award* to join the ranks of these prestigious past recipients.

The *Iron Eyes Cody Award*, presented by Keep Cincinnati Beautiful, honors the efforts of individuals or organizations that have a positive change in litter prevention, recycling, or beautification throughout the city of Cincinnati.

The District worked hard this past year and accomplished many tasks in order to earn this award. This includes, but is not limited to, turning 2,000 tons of yard waste into compost, disposing of 10,000 illegally discarded tires, collecting 600,000 pounds of household hazardous waste, and providing over \$1 million in grant funding to support recycling programs in the county. Additionally, the District provided numerous hours of technical assistance to communities, such as the city of Cincinnati, looking to improve and maintain their recycling programs.

The strong commitment to recycling and waste minimization earned the county’s Solid Waste Management District appreciation for going above and beyond to be good stewards of the earth and its resources.



Congratulations to the Solid Waste Management District’s team for a job well done and a well deserved recognition.

SERVICE AWARDS



25 YEARS OF SERVICE

Delores Johnson began her career with Job and Family Services on November 3, 1980. Delores has served in a number of positions throughout her tenure, including Account Clerk 2, Account Clerk 3, and an Accountant 1. Delores has always been a team player. Her experience in the Fiscal Division has made her a valuable asset to the Accounts Payable Department. Delores has reached 25 years of service and is still going strong. She is commended for her hard work and dedication over the years. Congratulations, Delores.

Sonya Kissing started with Job and Family Services (JFS) on November 3, 1980 as a Food Stamp Cashier. She was promoted to Clerical Supervisor in Income Maintenance in 1982. In 1989, Sonya was promoted to Food Stamp Office Manager, and in 1990, was promoted to Management Analyst in the agency's first Quality Assurance unit. With Sonya's love for computers and her willingness to train staff on Microsoft Windows, she joined Information Systems in June 1999, as a Technical Trainer. This has been a perfect fit for her. Sonya is considered a computer angel by the many customers she serves each day. Her main responsibility is to train JFS staff and others, including providers and other county employees who use JFS applications. Sonya is able to troubleshoot production problems, develop training material, incorporate teamwork, communication, and leadership skills in the many projects she becomes involved. Sonya is truly an asset to JFS and deserves to be recognized as a leader with significant value and contribution. Congratulations, Sonya!

30 YEARS OF SERVICE

Raymond Douthit began his career with Job and Family Services in November 1975. Ray worked for many years in Workforce Development – providing direct service, management, and training to assist low income county residents in developing job skills and gaining employment. Ray was promoted to a Team Leader position and managed staff in the Integrated Service Business units during Welfare Reform. Ray was again promoted to the Quality Improvement section and worked with homeless shelters/emergency housing providers to improve service access. Ray transferred to Contracting where he assisted with reporting and data management projects. Thank you, Ray for 30 years of service to Hamilton County.

Bonnie Hill began her career with Job and Family Services in Child Support Enforcement in October 1975, where she worked 13 years. Bonnie then worked as an Income Maintenance Caseworker for approximately two years. Bonnie has been in Fraud Investigations ever since. Bonnie really found her niche and has consistently been a top performer in her position. Thank you, Bonnie for 30 years of service to Hamilton County.

Mary Hendricks Casey began her career with Job and Family Services in October 1975, as an Income Maintenance Caseworker. Mary was transferred from that position to Fraud Investigations, where she worked for the majority of her years with the Agency. Mary has also worked in collections. She was a dedicated employee who just recently retired from the Agency. Thank you, Mary for your 30 years of service to Hamilton County, and we wish you the best in retirement.

Start SMART

Do you smoke and wish you could quit? Is your New Year's Resolution to quit smoking? Then, now is your opportunity to take advantage of our Brown Bag Lunch series, the **Start SMART** smoking cessation program.

Offered by the county's Benefit's Division and the General Health District, **Start SMART** is a structured, research-based medical approach to the treatment of nicotine dependence. Classes are taught by a certified **Start SMART** facilitator.

The program includes,

- A 20-minute individual screening session
- Six, one-hour group sessions
- 30 and 50 day follow-ups

Topics covered:

- Nicotine replacement therapies and available medications to help you quit
- Urges, cravings and slips
- Stress management
- Weight management
- Relapse prevention

When

Individual screening sessions will take place on January 9, 2006, by appointment. Classes are held Mondays from noon until 1:00 p.m., beginning January 23 through March 6, 2006.

Where

County Administration Building
138 East Court Street
County Personnel Training Room 710

Cost

The program is free, but participants are responsible for the cost of any medications.

Interested employees should contact Susan Schaefer, General Health District, 946.7812, for more information or to register and schedule their individual screening appointment.

Start SMART is funded, in part, by the Ohio Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Foundation.

Personal security

Human Resources Development offers quarterly personal security training classes to all county employees.

The goal of the course is to increase participants' personal confidence and ability to control confrontational situations. The course places an emphasis on confrontational training and hands-on defense skills. The techniques trained are designed to allow participants to work within their personal strength and fitness abilities to maximize their effectiveness and their ability to survive a hostile encounter. Activities and instruction include demonstration, role-plays, lecture, and hands-on practice.

Objectives: participants will be able to:

- recognize potentially dangerous situations
- avoid potentially dangerous situations
- If necessary, use body posture, defensive stance, verbalization skills, and control holds to deal with a hostile encounter.

Check with your training coordinator to sign up today.

December calendar

National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month

- 1 – World AIDS Day
- 1-31 – Christmas Tree Month
- 4-10 – National Hand Washing Awareness Week
- 15 – Bill of Rights Day
- 17 – Wright Brothers Day
- 21 – Forefathers' Day
- 25 – Christmas Day
- 26-1/2 – Chanukah
- 26-1/1 – Kwanzaa
- 31 – New Year's Eve



Word of the Month

(not found in the dictionary)

snirt (noun)

Snow that is dirty, often seen by the side of roads and parking lots that have been plowed.

Source: Merriam-Webster Online

Print and post

*Hello,
Hamilton County*

in your area!



2005 Employee Opinion Survey
 County Commissioners Phil Heimlich, Pat DeWine, and Todd Portune thank all the employees who participated in the employee opinion survey conducted by Quantum Market Research, as part of the *Business Courier's* "Best Places To Work" program. Employee responses are seen in the table below which gives an overview per category.

How to read the Report

The Category Overview scores report survey responses on the category level. Each question on the survey is categorized into one of ten themes, e.g. Team Effectiveness. The Response Count column represents the total number of employees that answered all questions in a specific theme. The Avg column represents the average response to all questions within a specific theme, on a 6-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree and 6 = Strongly Agree).

2005 Employee Opinion Survey
Hamilton County Board of Commissioners – Category Overview

	Response Count (approximate)	Average	Favorable (Agree and Strongly Agree)	Neutral (Somewhat Disagree and Somewhat Agree)	Unfavorable (Disagree and Strongly Disagree)
Team Effectiveness	1127	4.4	58%	31%	11%
Retention Risk	1125	4.0	48%	30%	22%
Alignment with Goals	1123	4.1	49%	33%	18%
Trust with Coworkers	1122	4.8	70%	24%	6%
Individual Contribution	564	4.3	58%	25%	17%
Manager Effectiveness	1396	4.3	58%	25%	17%
Trust in Senior Leaders	1075	3.4	32%	36%	32%
Feeling Valued	1116	3.3	31%	34%	35%
Work Engagement	1116	4.7	66%	26%	8%
People Practices	507	4.3	55%	32%	13%

CERT training for county employees

County employees can take an important step in improving personal emergency preparedness by signing up to become a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteer. CERT training is designed to help participants cope in the hours immediately after a disaster before professional first responders are able to assist.



CERT training consists of eight training modules delivered over a period of two 8-hour days. It's a combination of classroom and hands-on training



teaching emergency preparedness in the home, basic first aid, light search and rescue techniques and fire suppression. CERT also teaches teamwork and how to work with other CERT-trained individuals. The training is delivered by professional instructors from the American Red Cross. Major disasters like tornados, explosions or earthquakes cause widespread injuries and damage. Communications are disrupted and roads are blocked making it difficult for first responders, such as fire and emergency medical services to reach the victims. CERT training can help prepare individuals for such emergency, save lives and protect property until help arrives.



CERT is a program of the Citizens Corps, an organization whose purpose is to unite communities and



prepare the nation for emergencies. It is funded through a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). By becoming a CERT volunteer participants are also responding to Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 which establishes policies to strengthen the preparedness of the United States to prevent and respond to domestic terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies.

Training classes are scheduled for the second Tuesday and Wednesday of each month at the American Red Cross. The 2006 first quarter schedule is:

- January 10 and 11
- February 14 and 15
- March 14 and 15

The process to register for one of these classes is the same as for other training:

- ✓Get you supervisors approval to attend the class
- ✓Ask your Training Coordinator to register you for the class
- ✓Wait for a confirmation letter for the class

Sign up today!

CERT FAQs



What is CERT?

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills. Visit <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/CERT/overview.asp> for more information.

How does CERT benefit the community?

CERT trained people have a better understanding of potential threats to the home, workplace and community, and can take the right steps to lessen the effects of hazardous situations.

Why take the CERT training?

Local government prepares for everyday emergencies. However, there can be an emergency or disaster that can overwhelm the community's immediate response capability. While adjacent jurisdictions can activate to help, there may be a delay for them getting to those who need them. The primary reason for CERT training is to give people the decision-making, organizational, and practical skills to offer immediate assistance to family members, neighbors, and associates while waiting for help. The goal of the CERT program is to help people respond effectively and efficiently without placing themselves in unnecessary danger.

What about liability?

The text of the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 is located at <http://www.mtn.org/handiham/vpa1997.html>. During training, the sponsoring agency will brief CERT members about their responsibilities as a CERT member and volunteer. Also visit <http://www.citizen corps.gov/councils/liability.shtml> and http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/CERT/new_CERT/t3-0.htm.

How is the CERT funded?

Congress has provided funds through the Citizen Corps program to the States and Territories.

The Board of County Commissioners



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Phil Heimlich
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Commissioner
Pat DeWine
Vice President
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Commissioner
Todd Portune
Member
todd.portune@hamilton-co.org

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Happy Holidays

"Got News?"

Send an e-mail to:
sharon.booker@hamilton-co.org.

Next issue deadline: **December 30**

Safety tips

- When walking, walk in the middle of the sidewalk and walk facing oncoming traffic.
- If you carry a purse, carry it close to your body, preferably in front. Carry no more money or credit cards than you absolutely need.
- Keep your car in good working order and the gas tank at least half full.
- When you approach your parked vehicle, visually check the area around the vehicle for any suspicious persons or activity. If you observe anything suspicious walk to where there are other people and call the police.
- Always park in visible, well-lighted area.
- Attempt to avoid parking next to a larger pickup truck or van. These can be easy to hide behind.
- Have your keys ready when approaching your vehicle to reduce the time needed to enter.
- When operating your vehicle, keep the doors locked and the windows rolled up.
- Drive with all the doors locked.
- Exercise extra caution when using underground and enclosed parking garages. Try not to go alone.
- When stopped at traffic lights or in traffic, allow space between you and the vehicle in front of you so you can drive away if necessary.
- If someone approaches your vehicle and attempts to enter, blow your horn to attract attention and drive away.
- Many people consider a cellular telephone to be a good investment in safety.
- Do not open your window if someone approaches your vehicle to ask for directions, the time, etc. Keep the door locked.
- If you have a flat tire, drive on it until you reach a safe, well-lighted and well traveled area.
- If your vehicle becomes disabled and help is not immediately available, raise the hood of the vehicle (if you can safely do so), attach a handkerchief to the door handle, and then stay in the vehicle with the doors locked and the windows up. Activate your hazard or parking lights. If someone stops to assist you, ask them through the closed window to call the police.
- If you are being followed, don't drive home. Go to the nearest police or fire station and honk your horn. Or drive to an open gas station or other business where you can safely call the police. Don't leave your car unless you are certain you can get inside the building safely.
- Avoid isolated corridors or hallways.
- Be extra careful in stairwells and isolated or poorly-lighted restrooms.
- Avoid entering an elevator which is occupied by only one other person who is a stranger.
- In an elevator, stand near the controls and locate the emergency button.
- If you are assaulted while in an elevator, hit the emergency or alarm button and press as many floor buttons as possible.

If you have questions or suggestions for future editions, please contact Sharon Booker, 946.4428. To subscribe or unsubscribe visit <http://www.hamilton-co.org/newsletter/>. *Thanks to those who contributed to this issue.*