Welcome to our first issue of HR People Talk!

Our newsletter will be sent out quarterly with information and resources from Human Resources, Staff Development and Payroll. The purpose of our newsletter is to improve communication between NWACC HR, Faculty, and Staff. We hope you enjoy our first issue and the many more to come.

**Compensation**

Governor Beebe has included in his 2013-2015 Biennial Balanced Budget recommendation for state general revenue the funds necessary to provide a 2% Cost of Living Increase (COLA) in Fiscal Year 2014 for state employees. The recommendations will move to the Legislature for approval during the upcoming 89th General Assembly session that will convene on January 14th. The session will end in early April.

If the legislature approves this recommendation it will become part of the Revenue Stabilization Act (RSA), which provides the distribution of funds for state appropriations by assigning levels of funding priorities to the appropriations. The Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration and the Office of Personnel Management will then notify all state agencies and institutions of higher education with details of the bill. It will then be up to NorthWest Arkansas Community College whether or not to put in place this salary adjustment based on budget projections for the upcoming year.

If this recommendation does get approved, Human Resources/NWACC will notify all Faculty and Staff once we have all the details and a plan in place.
Get Active

Why Get Active?

We all know that exercise is good for us, but nearly 70% of Americans do not get the physical activity they need. Living an active life is one of the most rewarding gifts you can give yourself and those you love. Simply put, daily physical activity increases your length and quality of life. If you get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day (like brisk walking), five times per week, you can almost guarantee yourself a healthier and more satisfying life while lowering your risks for heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Parents, your children need 60 minutes a day–every day–so when you get active, you’re also modeling healthy living for the next generation.

What Can I Do To Get Active?

• MAKE THE TIME
Nearly all of us feel time-crunched and over-scheduled. Although anyone can fall into a busyness trap, only you can make your health a priority over life’s other demands. Even our nation’s President sets aside time to exercise. It can be done and only you can say “no” to interruptions and “yes” to your good health!

• START WITH WALKING
Walking is one of the best ways to get started. It’s easy, it’s social, it requires no special equipment, and it works! Just walk fast enough to get your heart rate up. Most of us can expect to cover 2 miles or more in a thirty minute block of time. If thirty minutes seems like an impossible goal, start with less. Some physical activity is always better than none! You chart your progress as you work your way toward your goals.

In the Spotlight....

Staff Development
What We Do

Staff Development provides employees with training and development needs, including new employee orientation and on-boarding. Additionally, we invite feedback and requests from managers and staff in order to continually improve training and development options at NWACC.

We are working on the details for Staff Development Day 2013 including a visit from Paul White, coauthor of The Five Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace as a key note speaker. Save the date now: June 5, 2013! Stay tuned for more exciting announcements about Staff Development Day 2013 in the next newsletter.

We invite you to visit our website for the most current training and development opportunities. Our interactive Calendar makes it easy to register for a class via Outlook. Our online Training Request makes it easy to ask for departmental training and development not found on the Training Calendar.

Current Areas of focus include:
• New Employee Orientation and On-Boarding
• Supervisor NWACC
• Departmental Team Building Requests from Supervisors
• Technical Training and Support for Supervisors and Employees
• Administrative Services Web-Site Maintenance
• HR Newsletter
• Creating on-line tutorials and videos and training
PAYROLL

2013 PAYROLL TAX CHANGE

Effective January 1, 2013, the Social Security tax rate reverted back to 6.2%, as the temporary tax cut that we enjoyed in 2011 and 2012 has now expired. An extension of this cut was NOT part of the recent tax and spending legislation approved by Congress.

For our employees, this means that the amount of tax withheld on income that is subject to Social Security tax, will increase from 4.2% to 6.2%, with a corresponding reduction in net pay, beginning with our first check this month. For example, an employee with a biweekly taxable gross of $1500, should expect an increase of $30 in the amount of tax withheld on January 11, 2013.

SAVE A TREE! SIGN UP FOR ELECTRONIC W2 DELIVERY

The 2012 W2 forms was finalized before January 31, 2013. Don’t forget to sign up for electronic W2 delivery for next year. This allows the payroll department to deliver your W2 to you only in electronic format and saves the resources required to print and mail a hard copy. Current and past W2s are quickly and easily accessible via EagleNet. Click on this link, http://content.nwacc.edu/administrativeServices/StaffDevelopment/Benefits/ElectronicW2/ElectronicW2.htm, for instructions.

SPEAKING OF W2’S….

One of the requirements of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) is that, beginning with tax year 2012, we must report the total cost of your employer provided health coverage, both employer and employee contributions, on the W2 form itself. This is the cost of your medical coverage only, and does not include dental, vision or any other benefit amount. You will see this information in Box 12, with a code of DD. Please note that this amount is informational only and is not included in your Box 1 earnings. The reporting of your health insurance cost does not affect your tax liability or payments in any way.

NEW YEAR – NEW INFO?

The beginning of the new year is the perfect time to make sure all of your Human Resources and Payroll information is up to date. Have you moved or changed telephone numbers? Need to adjust your W4 withholding allowances? Have you finally opened that savings account and want to set up automatic deposits? You can find all the forms you need on the Human Resources webpage at https://www.nwacc.edu/web/personnel/forms.php. Send completed forms to the HR office in Burns Hall.

Ask Payroll!

Is there something about payroll that you’ve always wanted to know but were afraid to ask? Now’s your chance. Timesheets, taxes, garnishments, pre-tax vs. after-tax deductions, W2s, W4s, etc. … if you have a burning question, e-mail it to rroitz@nwacc.edu. We’ll publish the answers in a future newsletter and on the human resources web page.

Our first quarter question is a common one this time of year: “Why are the total earnings that are shown in Box 1 of my W2 different from my total gross pay for the year?”

Answer: The amount in Box 1 represents only the portion of your earnings that the government can tax. Your contributions to various benefit plans throughout the year, including medical insurance and retirement, are made with tax exempt or tax-deferred dollars and those contributions reduce your taxable income. Long story short, your Box 1 earnings = gross income less total pre-tax deductions.
Save More for Your Retirement

It’s never too late to save for retirement. With the uncertainty of Social Security, pensions and rising healthcare costs, it may be wise to set aside additional savings for retirement. Enrolling in a TIAA-CREF Supplemental Retirement Plan will steer you towards your retirement goals.

- Your contributions are payroll deducted from your check and can be as low as $25 per paycheck.
- Contributions are made before taxes are withheld which lowers your taxable income.
- You pay no taxes on your contributions or earnings until you receive this in retirement.
- You decide how your money is invested.
- You can change the amount of your contribution.

All full-time employees are eligible to enroll in a TIAA-CREF Supplemental Retirement Plan. The IRS 2013 contribution limit is $17,500 and the catch-up contribution for employees over fifty years is $5,500.

For more information about establishing a Supplemental Retirement Plan account or to make changes to your plan, contact Barb Gordon, Benefits Coordinator at bgordon@nwacc.edu or at 479-619-4143.

BACKGROUND CHECKS TO BEGIN!!

NWACC has contracted with General Information Systems (GIS) to provide background checks on all new employees, both part-time and full-time. The new process began January, 2013.

Mark your calendar for the American Heart Association Heart Walk

To join the NWACC team contact Beverly Hill @ bhill3@nwacc.edu

April 13, 2013