

# STATE EMPLOYEE TELEGRAM

News for State Employees in the Land of Lincoln

## Message from the Governor

As 2015 comes to a close, I want to thank every one of you for your service to the people of our great state. Over the course of this year, I have had the opportunity to visit and speak with many state employees providing valuable services to people across our state. As I have said in those meetings, each one of us shares the same boss - the people of Illinois. As public servants, we must spend each day working to make our state government more accountable to the taxpayers in order to deliver value for the people who live and work in our state.

That ability to deliver value is closely linked to the culture that we must all build together as employees. Therefore, as we strive to provide better services to taxpayers, it is important that we also improve our understanding and communication with one another. To further this effort, our administration is undertaking several new initiatives.

First, we have created an employee engagement survey for all agency employees. This survey will help assess key areas such as worker satisfaction, training opportunities, and work environment. All agency employees received a link to this survey via e-mail last week. Responses to the survey are anonymous, and will assist us in improving our culture and effectiveness. As managers, we must listen to the people on the front lines; this survey furthers that goal.

Second, we believe that the attributes that enable government to deliver value to the taxpayers - leadership, integrity, transparency, and accountability - must be continually fostered, evaluated, and improved through a strong compliance program. To that end, the Governor's Office is undertaking an effort to build a comprehensive compliance program for all state agencies, and has designated a Chief Compliance Officer to lead these efforts.

Illinois Department of Central Management Services

# CMS

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## Why "The Telegram?"

Abraham Lincoln was a President fascinated by science and innovation (Lincoln is our only President to receive a patent for one of his inventions). When Lincoln became President in 1861, the telegraph had been invented and conveying messages (called telegrams) for 17 years. Unsurprisingly, the government was behind the times in adopting this new technology. Lincoln, however, embraced this new form of messaging and used it to connect with Union troops and other officials across the nation during the Civil War. Lincoln saw the value of the telegram as a tool of leadership.

Finally, we must continue to improve communication between all state employees in order to foster the exchange of ideas that ultimately will help us carry out our shared mission - serving taxpayers. Each month, you will receive a copy of our new state employee newsletter, the State Employee Telegram. This newsletter will contain important updates on happenings in state government, highlight tools available to assist state employees, and feature good work being done in our agencies.

Diana and I extend our thanks and best wishes to you and your family and hope that you enjoy a peaceful and joyous holiday season. Working together, I know that we can continue to make Illinois a more prosperous state, where every person has an opportunity to succeed.

Bruce Rauner  
Governor

From the telegraph to the telephone, e-mail to instant messaging, the way that we communicate with each other and share ideas is ever-changing. The value of sharing information remains just as important to operating a successful government as it was in Lincoln's time. We hope that the State Employee Telegram will be a useful tool as you serve the citizens of the Land of Lincoln.

*Information on Lincoln and the telegram comes from Tom Wheeler's Mr. Lincoln's T-Mails: The Untold Story of How Abraham Lincoln Used the Telegraph to Win the Civil War (Harper Collins, 2009).*

## Tollway and DCFS Team Up for Kids

The Illinois Tollway and the Department of Children and Family Services are teaming up with Chuck E. Cheese to give children in the care of the state and their foster families a fun night out.

Over the past several years, the Tollway has collected thousands of Chuck E. Cheese tokens that were tossed in Tollway coin baskets. Instead of throwing the tokens away, the Tollway wanted to find an innovative way to use this unique currency. Chuck E. Cheese offered to allow the Tollway to trade the tokens in for 100 family passes, which are good for one large pizza, four soft drinks and 30 game tokens. These family passes will be distributed to foster families throughout Illinois so that children

## 2016 Holiday Calendar

Holiday	Date
New Year's Day	Friday, January 1
Martin Luther King Day	Monday, January 18
Lincoln's Birthday	Friday, February 12
Washington's Birthday (President's Day)	Monday, February 15
Memorial Day	Monday, May 30
Independence Day	Monday, July 4
Labor Day	Monday, September 5
Columbus Day	Monday, October 10
General Election Day	Tuesday, November 8

## **Tollway and DCFS Team Up for Kids**

in foster care and their foster families can enjoy a fun night of pizza and games.

Through creative thinking and interagency cooperation, the Tollway and DCFS are turning seemingly worthless tokens into what the agencies hope will be special memories for children in foster care and their foster families.

## **2016 Holiday Calendar**

Veterans' Day	Friday, November 11
Thanksgiving	Thursday, November 24 Friday, November 25
Christmas	Monday, December 26

Please note that holidays are subject to change due to continuing negotiations between the State and various unions.

## **Public Service is a Public Trust: Why Compliance Matters in State Government**

As public servants, we have a responsibility to the citizens of our state to conduct the taxpayer's business with integrity, honesty, and transparency. Our fellow citizens have put their trust in us to be good stewards of their tax dollars and public programs, and we must exercise these duties faithfully and in compliance with the law and ethical standards. When a public servant abuses this trust, it diminishes the public's confidence in government and distracts from our ability to serve the public interest.

The success and stability of our state ultimately depends on the actions that each of us choose to take when we come to work each day. We each have an obligation to the citizens of our state - to our families, our neighbors, our colleagues, and ourselves - to conduct the people's business with integrity, honesty, and in compliance with laws, regulations, and policies.

While Illinois has audit and ethics oversight and enforcement systems, there historically has not been any internal structure within executive branch agencies to prevent and mitigate compliance issues. Our new compliance program will aim to (1) foster a culture of ethics and compliance by providing clear policies, procedures, and trainings for employees, (2) detect, report, and address allegations of misconduct, and (3) provide agencies and employees with the tools and guidance to comply with applicable laws and regulations.

Over the coming months, we will be rolling out new programs and tools for agencies and employees to utilize as we all work to build a more ethical and accountable government. As an employee, the most important thing that you can do if you have a genuine concern about unethical, inappropriate, or illegal behavior is to speak up. Retaliation against employees who raise concerns is not tolerated and is cause for appropriate corrective action. To raise a concern, contact your agency ethics officer, whose contact information

can be found at <https://www.illinois.gov/oeig/ethics/Pages/EthicsOfficers.aspx>. We look forward to working with all state employees on this exciting new effort. By acting with ethics and integrity in compliance with laws, we all can play a part in ensuring that state government serves the interest of the taxpayers.

Georgia Man  
Chief Compliance Officer and Associate General Counsel to the Governor

## Holiday Tips from the State Fire Marshal

### Holiday Decorations

- Make sure your tree is not blocking an exit and is at least three feet away from any heat sources such as fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents, or space heaters.
- Make sure artificial trees are tested and labeled as fire resistant.
- When using a fresh tree, make sure the green needles don't fall off when touched. This could mean that the tree is brittle and dry, and therefore hazardous.



### Holiday Lights

- Never overload extension cords, outlets, or power strips. Use no more than three light sets on any one extension cord.
- Extension cords should be placed against the wall to avoid tripping hazards, but do not run cords under rugs, around furniture legs, or across doorways.
- Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.

### Candles

- Avoid using candles in the bedroom, where two of five U.S. candle fires begin, or other areas where people may fall asleep.
- Never use lighted candles near trees, boughs, curtains or drapes, or with any potentially flammable item.
- Use candle holders that are sturdy, won't tip over, and are placed on uncluttered surfaces.

## **Teamsters Start Performance Bonus Program**

Over the last several months, various unions have agreed to new contracts that allow high performing employees to receive bonuses. Beginning in January, the employees who ratified their contract last summer will begin being considered for these bonuses. IDOT, working with the Teamsters, has spent months setting up a fair, flexible, and objective system to reward employees. Fifty percent of eligible IDOT Teamster employees will get bonuses next summer, ranging from \$1500-\$4000, with half of all bonuses near the high end of that range.

A performance bonus program for State Police Master Sergeants, who also agreed to contracts with these provisions, will begin in January. Pro-Tech Teamsters and Trades members should expect a similar program at a later date due to the later ratification of their contracts. All of these unions will also be eligible for "gainsharing" programs, under which employees can share in savings that they help the State achieve.

The State realizes that there also are many high performing employees that are not members of any union. Unfortunately, the previous merit pay program for these employees was suspended in 2009 and has not returned. In fact, a large number of these individuals have not received any sort of pay increase for many years. We are therefore working to correct this situation and create merit pay programs for these employees as well.

## **Collective Bargaining Negotiations Continue**

Over the last year, the CMS labor team has reached agreements with 17 different bargaining units representing thousands of state employees. Those employees are now eligible for year-end performance bonuses, will be paid for taxpayer cost-savings ideas, and will enjoy several options for tailoring their health insurance coverage to their needs.

However, after nearly a full year of negotiations, we remain far apart with AFSCME. Many of the same provisions agreed to with the 17 unions mentioned above have been rejected by AFSCME.

We're nevertheless still striving to get a deal done with all labor unions. In fact, in the interest of moving things forward, we've often gone ahead and made additional concessions to our own proposals rather than simply wait for weeks without a response from union officials. After so many months of negotiations with AFSCME specifically, this is where the State is currently on a number of its proposals:

- We've made major concessions on our healthcare proposal, with an offer that would fund almost three-fourths of employee healthcare costs, offer new, more affordable plans, and cap premium increases in future years.
- We've offered to keep current wages steady, even though the State's financial condition is the worst in the country.

- We've retained numerous provisions to protect employee seniority and vacancy rights. We've retained numerous provisions to protect employee seniority both for filling of vacancies and in the event of a layoff.
- We've proposed performance bonuses similar to what was agreed to with the 17 units that have signed new labor contracts. For example, the top 25% of Teamster employees will receive an automatic bonus of about \$3800, and 50% of all Teamster employees will receive at least a 2% year-end bonus.
- We've proposed new gainsharing programs, where employees are rewarded for working together with management to achieve taxpayer savings.
- We've proposed protections against outsourcing, under which State employees will be given the opportunity to compete and beat outside vendors before any subcontracting occurs.
- We've proposed that existing employees retain the same amount of vacation time and holidays that they've always had, an amount which is well above what most private sector workers in Illinois receive.

These concessions are part of a larger goal of trying to reach an outcome that is in the best interests of everyone involved. State employees should not be punished for prior mismanagement. While Illinois state workers make more than state workers elsewhere, we have never proposed to lower AFSCME wages. In fact, with our new bonus and gainsharing programs, employees are eligible for sizeable increases in their current compensation.

At the same time, it would be irresponsible for us not to consider the state's financial problems: **we've got to be tight with our money now to ensure that our pension funds are still there when current workers retire.** Our proposals attempt to strike that balance: watching our pennies now to provide stability for the future. Since we are both taxpayers and employees, we know how important it is to carefully guard against overspending, waste, and abuse.

There has been a tremendous amount of time and energy spent on these negotiations and that can be a distraction from our main focus: serving taxpayers. CMS believes that its workers want and deserve to have some level of certainty regarding their future circumstances. Hopefully, the information above provides some clarity about where things currently stand regarding the State's proposals.

## From the Kitchen

### Grandma's Potato Chip Cookies



2 cups of softened butter

1 cup of sugar

2 teaspoons of vanilla

3 cups of flour

1 ½ cups of crushed potato chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a mixing bowl, cream together softened butter and sugar with electric mixer until fluffy. Slowly blend in vanilla and flour. Stir in crushed chips.

Drop by rounded tablespoon onto an ungreased baking sheet. Bake 8-12 minutes or until just lightly browned around edges. Transfer to wire cooling rack. While cookies are still warm, dip/roll top of each cookie in powdered sugar. Return to rack to cool completely.

*From the kitchen of Sheila Tapscott, CMS Bureau of Personnel*