

NEWS & INFORMATION

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Coming soon: Open enrollment

Now is the time from employees to start thinking about any changes they may want to make to their healthcare and flexible spending accounts.

This year's open enrollment period for health care and flexible spending accounts (FSA) is May 1-22. All changes made during open enrollment will take effect on July 1, 2017.

The state Department of Human Resources Management has not yet shared details about the changes to the current plans and premiums. This information will be shared with employees via the daily email and the Department of Human Resources website as soon as it becomes available.

For more information, contact the HR Service Center at 540-231-9331 or HRServiceCenter@vt.edu.

Second session added for Home Buying: No Down Payment? No Problem!

Due to popular demand, the Financial Wellness Series program "Home Buying: No Down Payment? No Problem!" will be offered for a second time on Wednesday, March 29, from 12-1 p.m. at North End Center (room 2440).

Buying a home is one of the biggest financial decisions a person can make and choosing the right mortgage product can be difficult with the variety of options available. In this session, staff from Community Housing Partners Homeownership will discuss the various loan products available in the New River Valley, including special financing that requires little to no down payment. Participants will learn about the advantages and disadvantages of each product and receive tips on how to prepare a credit report for a loan application.

Registration is required. To register, visit www.training.vt.edu, click "view by alpha", and search for "Home Buying: No Down Payment? No Problem!"

For more information contact Hokie Wellness at hokiewellness@vt.edu or 540-231-8878.

Cadets to carry rifles during March 25 drill competitions

All are welcome to watch the annual drill competitions for members of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets on Saturday, March 25. All rifles used are demilitarized, meaning they have no firing pins.

The Jaffe Eager Squad competition will be from 7 to 10 a.m. Each cadet's uniform will be inspected in front of Thomas Hall at 191 Turner St. NW, followed by the marching portion of the competition in the Perry Street Parking Lot 3, near Goodwin Hall. The rain location is the Perry Street Parking Garage.

The Eager Individual competition will be held on the Upper Quad and will run from 10:30 a.m. to about noon.

Each cadet company will field a squad consisting of a junior class cadet commander, two sophomore class cadets who serve as squad leaders, and eight first-year cadets. Each cadet's uniform

and rifle will be inspected, and then the team will conduct the marching portion of the competition.

Every company will then be represented by a first-year and a sophomore cadet for the Eager Individual competition, which determines the most knowledgeable and best-drilled cadets.

Members of the winning squad and the two individual winners will wear a special patch on their uniform for the remainder of their cadet career.

The Corps will conduct the competitions in accordance with the Army's field manual on drill and ceremonies.

For more information, contact Shay Barnhart at shaybar@vt.edu.

Blacksburg campus offices to open at 10 a.m. May 12

Virginia Tech's spring University Commencement Ceremony is scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, May 12, in Lane Stadium. The influx of graduates and their families arriving creates traffic congestion on the southern end of campus and along major arterial roadways.

To minimize congestion, President Tim Sands has approved a 10 a.m. opening for all university offices in Blacksburg on May 12. Employees who are not involved with commencement are urged not to travel to campus before the 10 a.m. opening. Certain offices must be open for commencement or for operational reasons. Thus, supervisors should use judgment and staff appropriately.

Employees are cautioned that traffic is typically heavy before and after the commencement events along Southgate Drive, Beamer Way, and Washington Street. Cassel Coliseum and the South End Zone lots will also be closed or restricted. Employees should adjust travel and parking plans accordingly.

For more information visit www.vt.edu/commencement.html.

Save the date for the Hokie Wellness Elder Care Symposium

On Wednesday, May 24 Hokie Wellness will host the annual Elder Care Symposium. The full-day symposium is designed to help employees who are caring for an elderly loved one now, expect to be caring for an elderly loved one in the near future, or want to learn more about growing older.

Employees and their families are invited to attend the entire symposium or individual sessions. The event will begin at 8 a.m. in the auditorium of the Biocomplexity Institute of Virginia Tech.

Returning as the keynote speakers this year are Karen Stobbe and her husband Mondy Carter. In addition to Stobbe and Carter, there will be other presentations about caring for an elderly loved one.

Registration for the symposium is required and will open in April. Additional information, including the schedule of events and presentation topics, will be shared with employees via the daily email as it becomes available.

The Elder Care Symposium is presented by Hokie Wellness in partnership with Warm Hearth Village.

For more information visit http://hokievillness.vt.edu/Employees/Programs/Elder_Care_Symposium.html or contact Hokie Wellness at hokievillness@vt.edu or 540-231-8878.

Live in or near Pulaski County? Consider vanpooling as a commuting option

There are two spaces available in the Pulaski County vanpool, with pickups in Pulaski, Dublin, and Fairlawn. Employees who live farther west can also join the vanpool. These employees can drive to Pulaski and ride to work from there, saving wear and tear on their vehicles.

The vanpool program is administered by Alternative Transportation. For more information, or to sign up call 540-231-2116 or send an email to gettingaround@vt.edu.

Virginia Tech to hold first powwow April 1

A small but dedicated group of individuals have spent months planning the university's first powwow, which will take place on April 1 on the Graduate Life Center lawn adjacent to Squires Student Center and the Newman Library.

Free and open to the public, this inter-tribal powwow will welcome all at 11 a.m. with grand entry slated to begin at noon. The opening prayer will be offered by renowned scholar and Native ambassador Henrietta Mann.

The powwow follows the recent Virginia Tribal Summit hosted by the Virginia Tech President's Office for the purpose of reinvigorating partnerships between the university and the commonwealth's 11 recognized tribes. The event offers the campus and local community an opportunity to learn more about indigenous cultures and the land we occupy. In particular, both the summit and the powwow offer acknowledgment of the Tutelo/Monacan people, who are the traditional custodians of the land, water, and air that Virginia Tech consumes.

Native at Virginia Tech, a registered student organization, is committed to advancing the visibility of American Indians and other indigenous peoples on campus, as well as raising awareness of the issues that confront these diverse populations. A Native American powwow is a ceremonial time of renewal and a way for Indigenous people to honor a spiritual connection to their ancestors. It is a gathering to socialize, dance, pray, and celebrate, but where each tribe or individual ascribes personalized meaning.

Organizers of Virginia Tech's inaugural powwow hope it will increase visibility of indigenous students at Virginia Tech, offering awareness of an existing community to students already enrolled, while potentially creating a draw for prospective indigenous students who may be interested in attending college. Moreover, organizers wish to share their culture while educating the campus and Blacksburg communities.

And while this traditional ceremony is a beautiful experience, it's important that attendees understand the sacredness of this ritual.

As such, here are some basic etiquette tips shared by Native at Virginia Tech powwow organizers:

- Listen to the emcees, as they will provide direction at all times (i.e. when it is appropriate to remove hats and caps, when photos are not allowed, etc.).
- Dress respectfully. Avoid revealing attire, costumes, or headresses.
- Do not touch the dancers or their regalia.
- Ask before you take a photo of individuals outside the arena and never enter the dance arena for a photo. Remember to listen to the emcee as they will direct when photos are not allowed.
- Feel free to engage in conversation (at appropriate times) with those around you; ask about what you don't understand, as many will be eager to share and explain their indigenous culture and knowledge.

The powwow is expected to last six hours, with an hour-long intermission at approximately 2:30 p.m. In the event of inclement weather, it will be held in the Old Dominion Ballroom of Squires Student Center. Food and artisan vendors will be present.

Sponsors for this inaugural powwow include: Native at Virginia Tech, Student Budget Board, Division of Student Affairs and Intercultural Engagement Center, American Indian and Indigenous Alliance, American Indian Studies Program, American Indian and Indigenous Community Center, Department of Psychology, College of Engineering, University Libraries, School of Performing Arts, The Graduate School at Virginia Tech, Multicultural Academic Opportunities Program, Department of Religion and Culture, Department of Marketing, Department of Management, Department of Sociology, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Diversity Council, Virginia Tech Alumni Association.

Mock airplane crash drill gives first responders opportunity to train

Members of the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad and several local first-responder agencies will put their training to the test in a full-scale drill that will simulate an airplane crash at the Virginia Tech Montgomery Executive Airport at 11 a.m. on April 8.

First responders from the Blacksburg Fire Department, Blacksburg, and Shavsville rescue squads; LewisGale Hospital-Montgomery; the Virginia Department of Emergency Management; and the Virginia Tech Police Department are also participating in the drill, among others.

In addition to approximately 45 first responders, there will be about 20 volunteers who will play the role of those injured by the crash. Volunteers will wear make-up designed to make their "injuries" look as real as possible. This will allow responders to practice resource coordination and lifesaving interventions in an authentic mock-up scenario.

Setup for the drill will begin at 8 a.m. The drill is expected to start at 10 a.m. and wrap up by 2:15 p.m. Flashing lights and sirens on emergency vehicles will be used during the drill. A Carilion LifeGuard Med-Evac helicopter will be on scene as well.

The event is free and open to the public. There will be an area sectioned off for spectators. A similar drill was scheduled for last spring, but cancelled due to inclement weather.

The rescue squad also conducts two mock DUI drills each year (fall and spring) to help educate students and the community about the risks of drinking and distracted driving. These types of drills help keep the rescue squad ready for all types of emergency situations and have led to multiple local, regional, and national awards over the years.

This year, the squad performed exceptionally well at the 24th annual National Collegiate Emergency Medical Services Foundation conference, receiving awards and recognition for basic and advanced life-support skills and mass casualty incident skills. The Virginia Tech Rescue Squad has served the university community since 1969 and is the oldest collegiate rescue squad in Virginia and the second oldest in the nation. The squad has 40 student members who perform the same functions as a municipal rescue squad and handle about 1,200 calls per year.

Virginia Tech News is published weekly during fall and spring semester and bimonthly during the summer sessions, by the Department of Human Resources and the Office of University Relations as a service to university employees who do not have computer access on campus. For more information, or to discuss submission of items call 540-231-7643.