

NEWS & INFORMATION

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Reminder: Changes made during open enrollment are effective July 1

Changes made during the May 1-22 open enrollment period will be effective July 1. New premiums and flexible spending account contributions for plan year 2015-16 will be reflected on the July 16 paycheck.

Flexible spending accounts for the 2014-15 plan year will end June 30. Participants have until September 30 to file for reimbursement.

Employees are encouraged to review their July 16 paycheck to ensure that the correct premium, flexible spending account contribution, and premium rewards (if applicable) are reflected.

University exceeds power down goal

The Virginia Tech community reduced power consumption by 28 percent during the power down event held on the Blacksburg campus June 25.

Preliminary results indicate the university reduced its campus electrical demand to an average 19,000 kilowatts for the hour. The goal was 21,000 kilowatts for the hour.

The annual power down event demonstrates the university's ability to reduce energy consumption in the event of an electrical grid emergency.

As a large consumer of electricity, Virginia Tech has voluntarily committed to reducing our electrical load in the event of an electrical grid emergency condition.

Such commitments by large electricity consumers help electrical utility companies to meet the peak demand that typically occurs during hot, humid summer afternoons and early evenings. As part of the commitment, the university must successfully demonstrate, for one hour, our ability to meet the reduced energy consumption goal.

We achieved our goal by reducing air conditioning in non-critical areas, turning off lighting, and turning off or unplugging equipment such as computers, appliances, and other electronics during the hour. In addition, we were able to increase the electricity generated by the campus power plant, which helped reduce our need from the national electrical grid," said Ruben Avagyan, campus energy manager.

The successful demonstration sets the stage for the rest of the 2015 peak demand season. The university remains on load reduction standby each Monday through Friday from noon to 8 p.m. through the end of September and must reduce its power usage in the event of an actual grid emergency.

In 2012 and 2013, the university reduced its electrical demand in response to actual grid emergency events.

Open enrollment for Aflac coming up

In fall 2015, Virginia Tech will begin to offer Aflac to all benefitted employees. Aflac is a supplemental insurance plan that pays cash benefits directly to the insured. Employees choose the policy that best suit their needs and have the premiums payroll deducted. The benefits are pre-determined and paid regardless of any other insurance that an individual

may have.

Open enrollment for Aflac will take place in August and September. Enrollment in the plan will be effective October 1. Virginia Tech will offer the following plans:

- Accident Indemnity Advantage
- Personal Cancer Indemnity
- Hospital Intensive Care
- Critical Care and Recovery
- Hospital Protection
- Short-Term Disability

More details, including pricing information, will be shared as it become available. For more information call 540-231-9331.

Parking permits on sale July 20

Parking permits for the 2015-16 school year go on sale July 20.

Buy online at <https://pay.parking.vt.edu/cmnn/auth.aspx> to avoid long lines. To purchase online you must use Visa, Mastercard or payroll deduction. If you purchase your permit online you will only be eligible to do pre-tax payroll deduction. Post-tax must be done in person.

To purchase a permit in person visit the Parking and Transportation Office, 605 Research Center Drive. 30-year employees can fill out the permit form and mail it to Parking and Transportation, 605 Research Center Dr. Blacksburg, VA 24060 or bring it in person.

Take a lunch time walk on Tuesdays

Get out of your office this summer and join other Hokies for a lunch time walk every Tuesday from 12:15 – 1 p.m. for the weekly walking loop meet-ups. Walking just 20 minutes a day can cut your risk of dying prematurely by 16 to 30 percent according to a study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

On rainy days, the group meets inside Cassell Coliseum. Otherwise, the group meets at various locations around campus to enjoy the outdoor Virginia Tech walking trails.

Look for the new Hokie Wellness Walking Group sign at the meeting location every Tuesday morning. You can also stay updated on the walking group through the Hokie Wellness Facebook page (www.facebook.com/hokiewellness).

For more information call 540-231-9331).

Friday, July 3, is an exam day for Summer Session I

Although Friday, July 3, will be recognized as a holiday in observance of Independence Day (July 4), it will also be an exam day for the end of Summer Session I.

Employees will treat July 3 as they would any other exam day that occurs when the university would ordinarily be closed, for example, Saturdays at the end of fall or spring semesters. stores, services, and entertainment.

Call 540-231-9331 for more information.

New paid research study seeks smokers

Researchers on the first floor of VTCRI are conducting a new brain imaging study on cigarette smokers.

Eligible participants must meet the following criteria:

- Current smokers, age 18-55
- Smoke at least 5 cigarettes per day
- Have been smoking for the past year

Eligible participants make \$15/hour for the first session, which will take 2-3 hours and involve an interview and filling out questionnaires, and \$20-60 for the second session, which would also take 2-3 hours and involve playing games during an fMRI scan.

Scheduling is very flexible to best accommodate your schedule.

For more information call 540-526-2068.

Study on social attitudes needs volunteers

Research at the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute are recruiting subjects for a behavioral and neuroimaging study on social attitudes.

Participants will:

- Answer questionnaires and complete assessments
- Play simple computer games during an MRI scan
- Receive \$50 for their participation
- Receive a CD of their brain images from the MRI scan

To be eligible you must:

- Be 18-64 years old
- Be a Caucasian (White American) who is a born citizen of the United States or a Chinese citizen studying abroad here in the U.S.
- Be free of metal implants
- Not be claustrophobic

If you meet the above requirements and are interested in participating, email participate@vtc.vt.edu or call 540-526-2120 or 540-526-2068.

ADHD support groups for employees and students now meeting on campus

Hokie Wellness and the Virginia Tech Psychological Services Center are partnering to offer Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) support groups for employees and students.

The ADHD support groups are designed to educate group members on ADHD-specific strategies, assist in navigating community support systems, and provide resources for available services. Additionally, the groups are meant to foster an environment where participants can openly discuss their experiences with ADHD, and receive support from other group members and leaders.

The meetings will be held from 12 – 1 p.m. in the North End Center on a monthly basis. No registration is required.

Parents or caregivers of children with ADHD:

- Meets the first Wednesday of the month
- July 1 and August 5
- North End Center, room 2200

Adults with ADHD:

- Meets the fourth Monday of the month
- July 27 and August 24
- North End Center, room 4380

For more information, contact Hokie Wellness at 540-231-9331.

Lyme disease on rise in New River Valley

One third of deer ticks collected from sites in Giles and Pulaski counties carry the organism responsible for Lyme disease, a study at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech has found. This follows reports from veterinarians and physicians showing higher rates of the tick-borne disease in Southwest Virginia's New River Valley.

Dr. Anne Zajac, professor of parasitology in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, co-authored a paper in *Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases* last fall that revealed the startling number of deer ticks carrying *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacterium that causes joint pain and flu-like symptoms in both people and dogs with Lyme disease.

Even though the American dog tick, which does not carry the disease, was previously thought to be the region's predominant tick species, the deer tick population has expanded in recent years. "Deer tick does well in cold weather, so even in the winter, people have to be vigilant," Zajac said. "Pet owners also need to be concerned about ticks and seek tick protection for dogs and cats year-round."

The Virginia Department of Health has reported high rates of confirmed Lyme disease cases among Southwest Virginia residents. Some people who are infected with the disease develop a bull's eye mark around the bite mark before developing a fever and joint pain, but not all do. Similarly, veterinarians in the area have seen an increasing number of dogs with these symptoms in their clinics.

"Based on what we've seen clinically, more and more dogs in our area are testing positive for exposure to the agent that causes Lyme disease every year," said Dr. Mark Freeman, assistant professor of community practice in the Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences.

Although Lyme disease presents a number of challenges to diagnose and treat, canine patients typically respond well to a three- to four-week round of antibiotics.

Freeman encourages dog owners to use products that repel or kill ticks regardless of their dog's vaccination status because ticks can spread a number of ailments, not just Lyme disease.

To determine how many deer ticks in the area carried *Borrelia burgdorferi*, Zajac and Mauricia Shanks, a pet grooming business owner and Lyme disease awareness advocate in Giles County, used cloth drags to collect more than 350 ticks from three sites in Giles and Pulaski counties. The sites included a public park, a residential area, and a playground near a recreational lake.

Dr. Brian Herrin, a graduate researcher at Oklahoma State University, identified the bacteria in the ticks as a part of his dissertation project and found a 33 percent prevalence rate. He worked under the supervision of paper co-author Dr. Susan Little, who completed her doctor of veterinary medicine degree from the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine in 1993 and is now one of the top veterinary entomologists and tick experts in the United States.

Zajac also worked with Dr. Mary May, a veterinarian at the Dublin Animal Hospital in Pulaski County, Virginia and 1989 graduate of the veterinary college, to review canine medical records between 2008 and 2012 and confirm that the Lyme disease agent is emergent or endemic in the region.

New 'Voice of the Hokies' hired

The Virginia Tech Department of Athletics and IMG, the school's multimedia rights partner, have hired Jon Laaser as "The Voice of the Hokies."

Laaser (pronounced "laser") has experience covering Richmond Flying Squirrels baseball and Virginia Commonwealth University basketball. Laaser will be heard on more than 30 Virginia Tech IMG Radio Network affiliate stations.

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