

To all WVTA members,

No doubt, as many of you are aware, now is a busy time for the WVTA. The West Virginia Legislature is in session and there are many issues concerning our membership. The WVTA will continue to push ahead with the legislative agenda approved by the Board of Directors.

Increasing the ranks of the uniformed positions within the West Virginia State Police will remain at the forefront of our agenda. Additional manpower will allow our membership the ability to more adequately fulfill the many obligations entrusted to us by the citizens of this state. It would just as importantly provide a higher level of officer safety for our membership. The additional troopers working our detachments will also help to alleviate the need to have troopers on-call excessively. This will allow our membership to spend more time with family and friends and less time waiting for a call-out.

There will be times when members will be on-call. It is the position of the WVTA that members should be fairly compensated for said time. The legislative agenda will seek to address this concern.

The overtime allotment for members of the department has remained stagnant for many years. With no change, current members now exhaust their standard amount within a short period. A few Magistrate Court hearings in a month would be enough to deplete most members of their usual allotment. The supplemental pay for our exempt members has not changed since approximately 1986. It is still set by code at \$236 per month regardless of the monthly hours worked. The WVTA will be advocating for an increase for both exempt and non-exempt members.

I can assure you that the WVTA Executive Board and Board of Directors will be a strong advocate for our membership. Along with our CWA Representative, Elaine Harris, we plan on being very active at the Legislature this year.

At this time, I would like to take a moment and update our membership on two issues of interest. Our WVTA Attorney, Marvin Masters, has advised that the WV Supreme Court has not set a date for the retirement lawsuit for the affected classes.

Also, there is an issue that came up at the last board meeting that our members should be aware of especially "Plan B" members. The WVSP does not carry insurance for troopers against uninsured or under-insured motorists. For example, if you are on duty and struck by a vehicle and the driver is uninsured/under-insured, you would not have additional insurance protection via the State. The Department would pay medical costs only. If you were forced to apply for a disability retirement, your benefits are set by state code and if you are Plan B, we know they are not very lucrative. If you would file a law suit against the offending party, you could only recover damages for pain and suffering. Additionally, most persons driving uninsured would not be able to pay a judgment against them anyway. Thus, you could not recover any economic damages via a law suit to supplement your retirement. The WVTA intends to research this issue. In the meantime, I would suggest that every member review their personal insurance policy which may or may not afford some relief.

Lastly, I would like to let our retired members know that you are still in our thoughts and prayers. I consider you all to be a valuable member of the WVTA family. The Board has directed that I send a letter to the Consolidated Public Retirement Board requesting a clarification on medical expenses for our retirees chosen for a benefit re-evaluation. In many cases, our members have incurred substantial travel related expenses complying with the CPRP requirements. I hope that with this clarification we can determine if travel expenses for those retirees forced to travel from out of state or otherwise long distances are reimbursable.

Fraternally,

Doug Gunnoe
President