

UNDER the DOME



FEBRUARY 9, 2015

Welcome

Under the Dome is a weekly update on actions and activities of the West Virginia Legislature, provided for West Virginia University faculty and staff by WVU's Office of State, Corporate and Local Relations.

WVU at the Legislature

More than 40 members of the Legislature and staff attended WVU's first "Lunch & Learn" session on February 4. Dr. Gene Cilento, dean of the Benjamin M. Statler College of Engineering and Mineral Resources, and Dr. Brian Anderson, director of the WVU Energy Institute and associate professor of chemical engineering for the Statler College, spoke about energy issues, highlighting some of the ongoing academic and research projects at WVU.

Next week's Lunch & Learn speakers are Steve Bonanno, interim director of the WVU Extension Service, and Tim Phipps, associate dean for research, Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design. The Lunch & Learn series will continue every Wednesday in February. The series is designed to provide legislators with educational information and demonstrate ways that WVU is a wise investment for the State of West Virginia.

Upcoming Key Dates

30th day (halfway mark) — Thursday, February 12

Last day to introduce bills — Monday, February 23

Bills due out of committees — Sunday, March 1

Last day of session — Saturday, March 14

Legislative Hot Topics

Right to work legislation was introduced this week (SB 337) and was a hot topic at the Capitol. If passed as written, the bill would prohibit requiring West Virginia workers to join unions in locations covered under union contracts. Currently, 24 states have right to work laws.

A bill that calls for the **nonpartisan election of judges** passed the House of Delegates this week and is now awaiting action by the Senate Judiciary committee. If passed and signed by Governor Tomblin, all judges, including the Supreme Court of Appeals justices, Circuit Court judges, Family Court judges and magistrates will be elected on a nonpartisan basis. West Virginia is one of seven states that continues to hold partisan elections of judges.

Continuing debate on **prevailing wage, alternative certification of teachers, charter schools** and **legal reform** occupied the agendas of many committees this week.

Coming Up

WVU and WVU Extension Day at the Legislature is Friday, February 13. More than 40 colleges and programs will provide interactive exhibits in the Upper and Lower Rotundas of the Capitol, while more than 400 middle and high school students involved in the state's 4-H program, along with adult volunteers and Extension faculty, will be on site to view the exhibits, learn more about the programs WVU has to offer and see the legislative process in action. The WVU Extension Service exhibit will highlight and celebrate 100 years of West Virginia 4-H camping. West Virginia University President E. Gordon Gee will receive proclamations from both the House and Senate and will visit with guests and exhibitors.