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GOV. JUSTICE CONTINUES TO DEMONSTRATE "TRUE CONSERVATISM" WITH BUDGET PROPOSALS

CHARLESTON, WV - On Wednesday during his 2019 State of the State address, Gov. Jim Justice submitted two budget spending proposals to the West Virginia Legislature. Currently, the state has a record Budget Surplus for Fiscal Year 2019, that ends on June 30. During the first six months of the fiscal year the surplus totals \$185.9 million. This doesn't take into account \$58 million in funds that were left unappropriated by the Legislature. Therefore, the actual surplus is \$243 million with the expectation that the state will actually experience a larger surplus by the conclusion of FY 2019. "So I am being very prudent and conservative," Gov. Justice said. "I am proposing we spend way, way less in the surplus funds that what we currently have and will have come the end of June." Gov. Justice's plan is to spend \$200 million of that surplus on the following:

- \$105 million will be dedicated to the PEIA Stability fund. (An additional \$45 million from various agency accounts, has been identified by the Revenue Department, and will be added to make the total contribution to the PEIA fund \$150 million).

- \$20 million will be put into Jim's Dream to buy all the necessary equipment to do job training that will certify and put recovering drug addicts and others back in the workforce and into productive jobs.

- \$5 million to expand Communities in Schools programs.

- \$200,000 to purchase vans for the Veterans Transportation program

- \$6 million to address a shortfall uncovered at the state Veterans Nursing Home in Clarksburg

- \$20.6 million to Corrections for Regional Jail payments

- \$15.3 million for appointed counsel fees in the Public Defender system since those billings are exceeding FY 2019 appropriations

- \$28 million for the Governor's Civil Contingency

fund to address statewide issues that need immediate action.

"The groundwork that we've put in place, the Roads to Prosperity, our commitment to education, and our commitment to the Veterans has led to these phenomenal surpluses and we are now able to do this incredible stuff and it is still very conservative," said Gov. Justice. "The Fiscal Year 2020 budget of \$4.676 billion we have sent up isn't even reflecting the current rate of inflation. Comparing the revised FY 2019 to the proposed FY 2020, the revenue estimates increase by \$94 Million or 2.1% and the appropriations increase by \$80 Million or 1.7%. So we can accomplish everything the naysayers have been saying we can't do without risking the farm."

Secretary of Revenue Dave Hardy said the work of the Governor "illustrates financial expertise at its best, business experience at its best and conservatism at its best."

"Thanks to the hard work of a lot of people we have an incredible story that's taking place in West Virginia and it keeps getting better," said Gov. Justice. "Hope for our state and our citizens has been restored and there are many, many brighter days ahead. Again, my FY 2020 budget reflects this growth while making certain we remain fiscally prudent."

Highlights of the Governor's proposed FY 2020 budget include:

- A pay raise of \$2,120 for teachers, \$1,150 for service personnel, and \$2,370 for other state employees (average of 5% raise), along with the second year of a three year increase for Corrections employees.

- Elimination of personal income tax on all Social Security benefits

- Major new dollars for Substance Abuse programs, Social Services, Tourism and deferred maintenance, including an additional \$25 million

for the Jim's Dream program (\$5 Million to the Department of Education for Childhood Drug Prevention Education, \$10 Million to the Department of Education, Vocational Division for Rehabilitation and a Workforce Readiness Transition Program and \$10 Million to the Department of Health and Human Resources for Substance Abuse Treatment).

- Funding 100% of Required Retirement Contributions.
- No new taxes.
- No use of Rainy Day Funds.

Gov. Justice said he also remains committed to making sure that cutting government waste continues to be a major part of his conservative approach to managing the state.

"We also have the potential to save an additional \$68 million after identifying that 2,007 positions have been vacant for more than a year," said Gov. Justice. "We're going to cut waste everywhere we can"

Governor, First Lady Justice offer condolences to the families after Clay fire claims the life of four foster children CHARLESTON, WV - Governor Jim and First Lady Cathy Justice issued the following statement of condolences after learning of an early morning fire today in Clay County that claimed the lives of four children.

"We are absolutely devastated and heartbroken after finding out about this horrific fire earlier today that claimed the lives of four of our beautiful West Virginia children in Clay County," Gov. Justice said. "Please join us as we pray for these young people and their families. It absolutely breaks our hearts that these children also had to endure the hardship of becoming foster children. This is an absolute tragedy."

MANCHIN TO DONATE SHUTDOWN SALARY TO FOOD BANKS ACROSS WEST VIRGINIA

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) announced that he will donate the salary he receives during the government shutdown to food banks across West Virginia. "If Congress cannot do our job, we should not get paid. As a result of this reckless shutdown, 340,000 West Virginians who depend on food stamps will go without that critical assistance. Children will go hungry, pregnant mothers will not get the nutrients they need and our elderly neighbors will not have dinner on the table. This is unacceptable. In West Virginia, we look out for one another and I know food banks across the state will be doing their best to fill this void. I applaud them for always stepping up to serve their communities," Senator Manchin said.

Gov. Justice: Turnpike toll increase delayed until Jan. 15

CHARLESTON, WV- Gov. Jim Justice announces that the West Virginia Parkways Authority has voted unanimously to delay the Turnpike toll increase planned for January 1, 2019. The toll increase will now take effect on January 15, 2019.

"I am pleased that my concerns regarding potential traffic delays, backups, and safety on the Turnpike were heard and that the Parkways Authority followed my recommendation and acted in the best interest of the great people of the state of West Virginia. I continue to urge everyone to buy an E-ZPass, and do it soon," Gov. Justice said.

Approximately 4,000 E-ZPass applications were submitted in the last 24 hours. As of Monday afternoon, over 19,000 applications were outstanding, 14,000 of those are completed and waiting to be mailed, the rest are waiting to be processed. 25,591 E-ZPass orders have already been filled under the new plan. 55,802 transponders were automatically converted to the new \$24 plan on September 25, 2018.



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