



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 1 Issue 4 September 2020

WEEKLY OPEN MEETING UPDATES

The proposed NMPRC Telework Policy was adopted by the Commission. This would include employee teleworking agreement which would also regulate teleworking after the COVID-19 Emergency Executive Order is rescinded.

Chief of Staff Jason Montoya was joined by General Counsel Michael Smith, ASD Director Jim Williams and other PRC staff members during their presentation to the DFA Board of Finance on September 15th on the previously tabled PRC request for an emergency operating fund/grant application for a private lease.

The funding was approved by the DFA Board of Finance in the amount of approximately \$142,000. The proposed building, referred to as the Bokum Building, is located in downtown Santa Fe and is comprised of 16,000 sf of office space. The Bokum building is still currently being occupied by the Santa Fe County Commission until it vacates by the end of October, the earliest time the PRC could begin its space planning.

Communication with Chief of Staff Jason Montoya

The PRC completed its move from the P.E.R.A. building, and has complied with the deadline to vacate by September 30, 2020.

Chief of Staff Jason Montoya thanked the DFA Board of Finance for approving the PRC's grant application. The funding will allow the PRC to acquire a private lease for the Bokum building. He added that in previous consultations with the Commissioners and input from the PRC staff, all agreed it would be best to delay the move until January due to the uncertainty of the pandemic.

The open meetings scheduled for September 23rd and 30th were cancelled. The next open meeting is scheduled October 7 via live stream on YouTube.

Updates from Human Resources Bureau Chief Rene Kepler

- Open/Switch Enrollment is underway until October 31, 2020. To access recorded webinars please visit: www.mybenefits.com
- The Telework Policy the Commission approved effective September 2, 2020 was distributed to the PRC staff along with the Telework Agreement Form. All staff were required to complete the Telework Agreement Form and obtain required signatures from their Supervisor and returned to HR by September 30, 2020.
- Early voting locations open in each county beginning Saturday, October 17, 2020 through Saturday, October 31, 2020. Employees that are registered to vote will be allowed to utilize two (2) hours of Voting leave for Early Voting. If you vote early you may not utilize Voting leave on Election Day. Those employee who wish to vote on Election Day, Tuesday, November 3, 2020, will be allowed to utilize two (2) hours of Voting leave. Voting leave is not allowed for absentee voting.

To view the latest updates on COVID-19, go to: cdc.gov

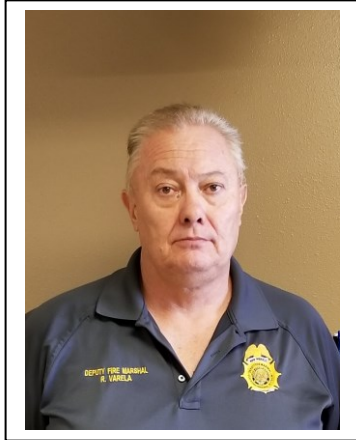
Flu Shots HERE! <i>at the</i> Stay Well Health Center!!	<u>Flu shots are available NOW to members at the Stay Well Health Center.</u>	
	Get vaccinated <u>before</u> the Flu Season hits! Make your appointment today to protect yourself and your family.	Monday – Friday 7AM – 6PM 827.2485
	The Stay Well Health Center will also provide a Flu Shot Clinic to your Santa Fe Location with 10 or more employees working in the office.	
	Set up your clinic by emailing: GSDRMD.EBB@state.nm.us	

The Employee Benefits Bureau would also like to let you know about FREE Flu vaccines through CHRISTUS St. Vincents. No medical coverage required!! Please see attached flyer for more details!



**2020
CHRISTUS St. Vincent
Flu Shot Clinics**
FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

PRC Employee Highlights



Randy Varela, Deputy Fire Support

Randy has been with the PRC for 14 years. He initially worked with the code enforcement for three months, then moved to investigations for two years, and then transferred to the Fire Support Bureau. Randy has been there since, except for a short period of time when he left the Fire Marshal's Office to work with the Santa Fe County then returned in July of 2018 to SFMO. He was promoted to the Deputy Position in March of 2019.

PIO: How has it been for you since the work-at-home mandate?

RV: Initially it was a shock. I was used to traveling with the guys. It was hard adjusting at first, but now it's good. At no point in time had I considered telework or managing telework employees as part of the plan. It took trusting myself and staff to continue to deliver quality service to the State's fire departments no matter where the service was being delivered from. I find that for me and my staff, productivity, morale, family and personal life have improved since the work-at-home mandate was implemented. I feel that collaboration, trust and respect are better, as well. I have a good crew.

PIO: How has COVID19 affected you personally & your family?

RV: We have not found this to be a huge inconvenience, my wife and I are both working from home with designated work spaces. We are empty nesters and do not have the added stress of home schooling.

PIO: Do you have any family member or someone close to you who has directly been affected by the Covid19 virus?

RV: Yes, I think my wife may have had this in late January - she fell ill and was hospitalized with all the symptoms. The diagnoses at that point in time was type A flu, slightly before the outbreak in the States; unsure now if it was the flu.

PIO: What keeps you up at night or worry about in today's world?

RV: National politics, we are more divided now than ever.

PIO: How do you manage stress and/or worries?

RV: I like to work in the yard - I find it to be comforting. My top stress reliever is laughter. I look for laughable moments in a day and share them with friends and colleagues.

PIO: After the pandemic passes, what are you looking forward to the most?

RV: Reunite with family and friends. Traveling, looking forward to planning that trip, not sure where yet but looking forward to it nonetheless.



Kevin works in the Pipeline Safety Bureau and has been with the PRC for over a year. As pipeline safety inspector his primary duty is to conduct standard inspections, ensuring enforcement of federal government mandates, which include basic operations, drug and alcohol plans, operator qualifications, and raise awareness and educate the public. Kevin has over 39 years of experience in the industry.

PIO: How has it been for you since the work-at-home mandate?

KD: As I told my grandson, if you get up, get ready as if you're leaving and you go to your little office or cubicle and you conduct yourself as if you're at work, it's not bad. It's a mental thing. My discipline is to prepare myself each day, at the same time, get up, get ready, get my coffee and go to the office. The only problem that we have is connectivity at home. The Zoom meetings were kind of cumbersome, and we were doing inspections via Zoom, but now we've just received permission to go back into the field. Personal connection with the operators is always better.

PIO: How has COVID19 affected you personally & your family?

KD: It really hasn't. My grandchildren are temporarily living with us. I think it has affected them more than the adults.

PIO: As primary liaisons for your grandchildren's learning – how have you structured your daily life at home to accommodate this major change?

KD: It's really been hard for them. All three of them are very social. The youngest one is going to preschool four days a week. He is probably dealing with it the best. They just moved here from Louisiana and they've never been to school in town here, and they're not used to a lot of things here.

PIO: Is that where you're from originally, Louisiana?

KD: No, my family is originally from Flagstaff, Az. I worked 20 years for a pipeline operator out of Flagstaff, then transferred to Florida. I did 15 years there, then did 5 years in Arkansas and we were working our way back out west.

PIO: What is a typical day like with your grand kids being at home and how have you kept them busy so far?

KD: We keep them busy. We expect them to get dressed and get outside and do something. We make sure they go for hikes up in the mountains; they've been to the wildlife zoo here in Edgewood. They're getting their education. My wife and I have a little work shop and we do custom leather work. We have a lot of tools, so they have plenty of activities they could do in the shop to keep them occupied.

PIO: What keeps you up at night or worry about in today's world?

KD: The thing that really worries us a lot is the reaction, allowing people to destroy other people's properties, burn them and actually hurting and killing people. We're Christians and every life matters and it doesn't matter whether your brown, black, yellow or white. It really hurts us when people act that way and they're allowed to do so.

PIO: How do you manage stress and/or worries? What is your top stress reliever?

KD: Probably working in our leather shop. We carve and stamp the leather and also paint a scene on it.

PIO: After the pandemic passes, what is the first thing you would really like to be able to do/or what do you miss the most during the pandemic?

KD: Traveling and seeing family in Arizona. Getting back to not being so restricted.



Georgia has been with the PRC since 2014. She is a management analyst in the Fire Marshal's Office. She mainly focuses on the Fire Fund distribution for all of 764 fire departments in New Mexico. She processes the annual applications and the distribution for the fund and the grant.

PIO: How has it been for you since the work-at-home mandate? How are you doing?

GM: I actually have been faring well since the work-at-home mandate. My job is fairly independent. Everything we do is through e-mail, for tracking purposes, but also the nature of the work allows for working from home.

PIO: How has COVID19 affected you personally & your family?

GM: Well, we haven't had anyone in the family who has been exposed or been treated for COVID19, but it did cause a lot of issues for the family with businesses – in terms of coping with all the changes concerning running a business. I have a brother who ran a large business and it had affected him very deeply and his employees. Otherwise, we've fared well except I did lose the same brother recently, unrelated to COVID-19; however, the added stress from COVID-19 could have been a factor.

PIO: How do you manage stress and/or worries? What is your top stress reliever?

GM: The way I do that is when I start to feel bad about a situation and how much there is to overcome, I stop and be grateful for the things that I do have. And, somewhere along the way, the things that you do have, outweigh the things that you are coping with. For stress reliever? Do something that makes you happy. For me, it's spending time with my 18-year old son, reconnecting with my family.

PIO: After the pandemic passes, what is the first thing you would really like to be able to do/or what do you miss the most during the pandemic? What are you looking forward to after the pandemic?

GM: Going anywhere – camping, out of state without being scared to come back. Moving about the country, visit places we haven't been able to visit, like sit down in a restaurant and eat inside, or go to a movie. I now appreciate what we lost, and what remains, all the more.
