

# Our Spring 2023 Newsletter

May 12, 2023

## In This Issue

- [WVSTC](#)
- [Interim Director's Note](#)
- [New Employees](#)
- [Career Opportunities](#)
- [Years of Service](#)
- [Department Updates](#)

**WEST VIRGINIA STATEWIDE TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE**

**LEADING THE WAY**  
THROUGH **INNOVATION + CHANGE**

**DON'T MISS OUT!**  
\$100 off discount for individual  
\$200 off per person Group discount  
with a group of 5 or more  
That's a savings of up to \$200!  
**ENDS MAY 31ST**

## West Virginia Statewide Technology Conference Update

We have been busy planning and this year's West Virginia Statewide Technology Conference which promises to be incredibly engaging and informative.

This year's event will feature keynote speakers Dr. Leanna Prater and Derek Bruff, interactive panel

discussions, and over 100 concurrent sessions that will offer practical insights and real-world examples of successful technology implementation.

We are also offering add-on pre-conference sessions on WVEIS (free for K-12 educators), Office 365, Brightspace, and Degree Works. K-12 educators will also have an opportunity to earn CEU's (continuing education unit) from Marshall and WVU for an additional fee.

We will be hosting an Exhibitor Reception in the Expo Hall with refreshments Wednesday from 4-6 pm and each evening we'll continue the fun with breakout social events in town and near the conference center: **Team Trivia**, Wednesday at the Morgantown Brewing Company, **eSports Exhibition**, Thursday at conference center, or meet up and play board games or just socialize at the Rooftop Bar.

## Panel Discussions

We are featuring panel discussions on The Future of Technology in Higher Ed, ChatGPT and AI, and Esports. Panel sessions are a great way to learn from the experts in the field, as well as to network and engage with other professionals on the topics we are all talking about.

## Concurrent Sessions

Our concurrent sessions include topics for K-12 Educators, Higher Ed, and general technology throughout the state of West Virginia. Attendees can expect to come away with a deeper understanding of the latest trends and innovations in educational technology. For a complete list of sessions, visit the conference website at <https://wvstc.com>.

## Conference Mobile App

With over 100 sessions, we know it will be difficult to choose what to attend. This year we are offering a handy mobile app that will allow you to plan your conference experience and connect with other attendees and exhibitors. If you have already registered, be on the lookout for an email invite to log in and install the app on your device.

## Register Early and Save

[Registration for the conference is underway.](#) We encourage you to sign up as soon as possible to take advantage of early bird and group registration rates. Act soon, as these rates end May 31. [For more information about the conference, including the program schedule and registration details, please visit the website or contact us.](#)

---



## From the Interim Director!

Steven White, WVNET Interim Director

### A Time for Change

The start of 2023 has brought about some a big changes at WVNET. Dr. Carl Powell has left his position as WVNET's Director and taken a new position to be able to move closer to his family.

Dr. Powell joined us in October 2019 and during his time with us, he oversaw several significant initiatives, such as overseeing the transition to a new Learning Management system and migrating to the Oracle Cloud environment

Dr. Powell will be missed but we wish him the best of luck in his endeavors. While a search for a new Executive Director is underway, I have been named Interim Director. Thanks to the support and knowledge of the dedicated staff, WVNET has continued to operate with very minimal disruptions in daily operations. With their support, I hope to continue the work that Dr. Powell had previously contributed and expand upon it.

I understand change can be difficult, but I'm also delighted to introduce our newest team members, Brad Benkart and Zach Carpenter, who bring fresh perspectives and skills to WVNET. Our current staff is also flourishing, with many achieving impressive milestones during their tenure with WVNET and the State of West Virginia. Don't miss the SERVICE MILESTONES section in this newsletter to learn more about their accomplishments. If you're interested in joining our dynamic team, please check out the JOIN OUR TEAM! section for the latest career opportunities at WVNET.

I would also like to remind everyone that after the excellent turnout last year, we are once again

hosting the West Virginia Statewide Technology conference from July 19-21st at the Morgantown Marriott. Registration is open and I would encourage you to sign up to ensure we have another successful chance to collaborate and learn together. More information can be found in this newsletter, or you can [go to wvstc.com to register](http://wvstc.com).

## WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES!

**Brad Benkart** joined the Network Operations Center as a new Network Operator on March 27, 2023.

**William “Zach” Carpenter** joined the Systems Administrator Group as the new Information Systems Specialist on April 10, 2023.

William grew up in Marion County and after high school he moved to Morgantown and attended WVU to pursue a Bachelor’s degree in Computer Science. He was a member of the Game Developers Club and an Undergraduate Researcher at WVU. William was also a Development Support Intern at Nextgen Federal Systems near the end of his time at WVU. He focused on working towards various certifications after graduating with his BSCS and also dabbled on software pet projects. When he isn’t focusing on technology, his interests include graphic design, golf, bowling, hiking, fishing, and reading. William is excited about getting to know the team at WVNET and is keen on the opportunities to come.



Your satisfaction is very important to us. WVNET has implemented a customer satisfaction survey link in our OZ ticketing system. When a help ticket is closed, the reporter will receive an email update with a link to allow customers to fill out the survey, and, if desired, request a call from a manager. To access the form in the OZ email, click on the link.

If you're not using OZ and you wish to take the survey, please feel free to complete the survey at <https://wvnet.edu/satisfaction-survey/>. We look forward to hearing from you. Have questions? Contact Harmony Garletts at [hgarletts@staff.wvnet.edu](mailto:hgarletts@staff.wvnet.edu).

[Customer Satisfaction Survey](#)

---

## New Schedule of Rates

Effective July 2023, WVNET has a new schedule of rates.

Visit <https://wvnet.edu/resources/schedule-of-rates/> to find out more.

---

## JOIN OUR TEAM!

WVNET is hiring for the following, full-time positions:

WVNET offers excellent State of WV Employee benefits package of: health insurance, dental, vision, hearing, Health Savings Accounts / Flexible Spending Accounts, retirement investing, and life insurance plans, short-term/long-term disability insurance, as well as, generous amounts of vacation, sick, state & federal holidays, and professional development opportunities.

To view full job details, check our website: <https://wvnet.edu/about/careers/> and submit resume to [careers@staff.wvnet.edu](mailto:careers@staff.wvnet.edu). EOE/AA/ADA Employer.

**ORACLE DATABASE ADMINISTRATOR - SENIOR** to assist State Higher Education institutions in working with AIX, Linux, and Oracle Cloud as the primary database administrator supporting critical applications such as Ellucian's Banner, Degreeworks, and other third-party applications. Salary \$70K - \$80K.

**TELECOM NETWORK SPECIALIST 3** to troubleshoot/design LAN, WAN, Campus networks,

wireless infrastructure, VOIP solutions, and ongoing maintenance/updating of hardware and software, etc. Salary \$70K - \$80K.

## SERVICE MILESTONES

### State of West Virginia Public Service Recognition Week (May 7-13, 2023)

Since 1985, the United States has designated the first full week of May as Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW) to honor the men and women who serve our nation as federal, state, county, and local government employees.

The State of West Virginia Public Service Recognition Week is a time to honor and thank WV public employees for their service, beginning with 20 years of service (and proceeding in increments of five years). For 2023, WVNET will have 2 employees reaching their years of service milestones for the State of West Virginia:

# 35

### **Dianne Sisler** **35 years of** **State of WV Service**

**Dianne Sisler** is a hardworking and dedicated employee. She is a pleasure to work with and always has a pleasant disposition. She is extremely knowledgeable and is always available when she is needed. Dianne often works with WVNET customers to share her financial aid insight and even shares her time by assisting schools with management of their financial aid departments when they are short-handed.

# 30

## **Libby Cress 30 years of State of WV Service**

**Libby Cress** is a dedicated and hardworking professional who has spent most of her career at WVNET. She started her journey in 1999 after gaining valuable experience in Travel and Asset Management at WVU. Since then, she has been an integral part of the WVNET team, serving in various roles such as purchasing, customer service, and accounts receivable. Libby is a people person, and she loves working with customers from all over the state. Libby has also contributed to the healthcare sector by working as a Nurse's Aide on Pediatrics and Orthopedics at WVU Hospital. Apart from her professional achievements, Libby is a proud grandmother to four beautiful granddaughters and two wonderful grand dogs. She is also blessed with a loving family, including her daughter, son-in-law, and supportive husband of 50 years. She is grateful for all the opportunities and experiences that have come her way and considers herself blessed. Outside of work, Libby enjoys spending time with her church and bowling group.

---

## **Milestones**

### YEARS OF SERVICE

Additionally we are celebrating our wonderful employees' service milestones (5 Years +) at WVNET



25

**Dianne Sisler**  
Banner Team Lead

10

**Russell McCormack**  
Software Developer/DBA

**Mike McDonald**  
Systems Administrator Supervisor

**Cory Morrison**  
Distance Learning



GUI Specialist



5

**Chevee Dodd**

Project Manager for IT and Application Development

**Harmony Garletts**

Manager of Client Services

**Nathan Justice**

Telecommunications Network Specialist II

**Suma Ponnam**

Information Specialist

**Zackery Smith**

LMS Assistant Administrator

## DEPARTMENT UPDATES

### CLIENT SERVICES UPDATE

#### Brightspace APIs and Extensibility

WVNET's Distance Learning team is always working to improve the user experience in Brightspace. Currently, the team is training to learn how to use Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) within Brightspace to improve reporting practices and external tool setup. Once the team completes the training session, they will be able to utilize these new skills in future projects and provide new custom development for all our customers.

# TELECOM UPDATE

On March 8, WVNET added increased Internet bandwidth through OARnet, which mainly serves customers in the South. WVNET is always monitoring bandwidth utilization around the state in effort to have enough available where it is needed the most.

WVNET also recently updated our SolarWinds installation to the latest stable release. SolarWinds helps WVNET proactively respond to network issues, view historical data, and maintains a backup of customer equipment configuration files.

After expanding Eastern Community and Technical College's (Eastern CTC) wireless network pool, WVNET's Telecom Team is researching specifications for new Wireless Access Points for Eastern CTC. WVNET uses the ExtremelQ Cloud to control, monitor, and update wireless devices. If you are interested in doing the same at your organization, please feel free to contact us for more information.

A new vendor has been chosen to assist with engineering WVNET's new high speed Transit Ring network. This work is tentatively scheduled to start in late June or early July. Once the new routers are installed, we will be able to support; up to 100Gbps links, an exciting upgrade from the current maximum per line capacity of 10Gbps.

# DEVELOPMENT TEAM UPDATE

## Accessibility Tips

Making your website or web application accessible to all users is not only important for ethical and legal reasons, but it also benefits your organization by making your site easier to use. However, ensuring accessibility can be a daunting task, especially if you're not familiar with the guidelines and best practices. Here are some tips to get you started:

- **Use meaningful and descriptive text for links and buttons.** Instead of using generic labels like "click here" or "read more," use text that accurately describes the destination or action, such as "view the meeting agenda" or "learn more about our program."
- **Provide alternative text descriptions for images.** This allows users who use screen readers or have visual impairments to understand the content of the images. Make sure your descriptions are accurate and descriptive.
- **Use color contrast to make text and images easy to read.** Ensure there is enough contrast between the text and background color so that it is readable for users with visual impairments or color blindness. Tools like WebAIM's Contrast Checker can help you determine if your color combinations are accessible.
- **Make sure your website is navigable by keyboard.** This is essential for users who can't use a mouse or other pointing device. Use the tab key to navigate through links and buttons, and make sure that the focus indicator is visible.

- **Provide captions and transcripts for audio and video content.** This is especially important for users who are deaf or hard of hearing. Ensure your captions are accurate and synchronized with the audio, and provide transcripts for users who may prefer to read the content instead.
- **Ensure your website is compatible with assistive technologies.** This includes screen readers, speech recognition software, and other tools that help users with disabilities navigate and access content. Test your website with different assistive technologies to ensure compatibility.

To discuss web development projects or if you are looking for support for your current website, send an email to [wvnet-support@staff.wvnet.edu](mailto:wvnet-support@staff.wvnet.edu) to schedule a meeting and review your project requirements.

## WVNET FINANCE UPDATE

WVNET is working with CliftonLarsonAllen's Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 96 team and will relay information to WVNET's Higher Ed and/or Community and Technical College customers as it pertains to them: GASB 96, it is effective for fiscal years beginning after 6/15/22.

**Statement No. 96** of the Government Accounting Standards Board provides guidance on the accounting and financial reporting for subscription-based information technology arrangements (SBITAs) for government end users (governments). This Statement (1) defines a SBITA; (2) establishes that a SBITA results in a right-to-use subscription asset—an intangible asset—and a corresponding subscription liability; (3) provides the capitalization criteria for outlays other than subscription payments, including implementation costs of a SBITA; and (4) requires note disclosures regarding a SBITA.

## SYSTEMS UPDATE

### Ransomware Threats are on the Rise

Ransomware attacks are up significantly in the first quarter of 2023, up 91% in March alone. With this in mind, everyone is highly encouraged to have this threat on the top of their list of things to be proactive and prepared for. A few WVNET customers are installing next generation firewalls on the edge of their network, which will provide them better visibility and threat detection on their networks. Please contact WVNET if you're interested in more information on the devices our customers have installed.

The following are some basic recommendations on how you can help prevent ransomware at your organization:

- **Regularly backup important data.** One of the best defenses against a ransomware attack is to ensure that important data is regularly backed up. This way, even if the attackers manage to encrypt or delete the data, it can be restored from the backup.
- **Install and update anti-virus software.** Make sure that anti-virus software is installed and kept up to date on all devices in your network. This can help detect and prevent malware infections that can lead to ransomware attacks.
- **Use strong passwords.** Ensure that all users have strong, unique passwords and consider using multi-factor authentication to add an extra layer of security.
- **Implement network segmentation.** Network segmentation can help limit the impact of a ransomware attack by containing it to a smaller portion of the network.
- **Conduct regular security awareness training.** Regular security awareness training can help employees recognize phishing emails and other social engineering tactics that are commonly used in ransomware attacks.
- **Use simulated phishing attacks.** Tools like KnowBe4 can help organizations simulate phishing attacks and test their employees' responses. This can help identify vulnerabilities and improve security awareness training.

Remember, no single solution can completely protect against ransomware attacks, so it's important to use a combination of different defenses to minimize the risk of an attack.

## Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) - Ransomware Guide

On September 30, 2020, a joint Ransomware Guide was released, which is a customer centered, one-stop resource with best practices and ways to prevent, protect and/or respond to a ransomware attack. CISA and Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) are distributing this guide to inform and enhance network defense and reduce exposure to a ransomware attack. The guide can be found at the link provided below along with other resources that can be found on the site.

<https://www.cisa.gov/stopransomware/ransomware-guide>