

# what's up doc?

by Dr. Mary Livers, PH.D, MSW, Deputy Secretary

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Hello, Everyone:

What a busy week we've had— every week is busy—but it seems like it's been one meeting after another. And then there's this weather. I can't even call it crazy anymore, it's just so...bizarre.

We had three different seasons in just this week—70 degrees one day, cold rain and icy roads again, and a spectacular 40-plus degree drop in temperature overnight. Although anything that holds water is frozen solid today, the Japanese magnolias are in full bloom. But the azaleas that usually show in March are almost completely still green, with few open buds. Maybe Mother Nature knows something that we don't. And then there's all the snow days we've had. Our staff in north Louisiana must have a lot of stroke with somebody in charge of weather, because they have had something like five snow days off in the last 10.

And now it's time this Sunday for the twice-a-year ritual when we “spring forward” to daylight saving time and turn all the clocks ahead. It's really hard to think of this as “spring” when the thermometer is below freezing. Are you as tired of changing clocks as I am? It seems like we just did that and now it's time to do it again. That's because the extension of DST by four weeks back in 2007 means we are on DST for eight months of the year. There's been a lot of buzz about DST nationally over the past few years and some interesting research caught my interest. Many of us have a hard time adjusting to the time changes (our bodies don't necessarily keep the same time as the alarm clock) and we can have sleep disturbances. Sleep deprivation can cause a loss of productivity at work, sleepiness when driving, even increased risk of heart attack. Some researchers see an uptick in criminal activity. A lot of people think we should just have DST all year long and forget about changing the time. I could go for that. But for now, we still have to spring this weekend and fall back in November.

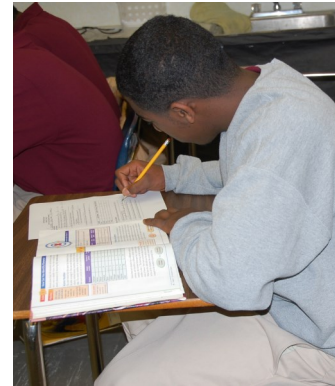
Last week the Commissioner of Administration presented the governor's initial budget plan to the Joint Budget Committee and right now our overall reduction in the proposed budget is \$1.9 million. That may not sound like a lot, but it is considerable. So, we are moving forward with a plan to avoid a layoff, as you may remember. We are offering a retirement incentive to eligible employees (those who are already eligible to retire or who will be eligible by July 31). I hope that by now you have all received the information we sent yesterday about the layoff avoidance measure/retirement incentive. If you are eligible to retire and have not received it, please ask your supervisor to give you a copy. While I hate to lose excellent, seasoned employees, we have to be realistic about our budget situation, and if the incentive is the right thing for your personal situation, you should consider it as an option.

All that said, we are still planning on opening Acadiana in accordance with the estimated completion date in May 2016. Construction is going well, and we will soon post some photos on the website so you can follow the progress. In case you are wondering about building a new facility when we are facing budgetary issues, the capital outlay budget for construction is separate from our regular operating funds.

I'll close for now with my wish for you all to enjoy your weekend, whatever the weather, (and remember to set those clock forward) with my sincere thanks to every member of the of the OJJ family, in every office and facility, for all you do, ESPECIALLY when you come to work on “snow days”, to meet the mission.

Sincerely,

“Doc” *Dr. Mary Livers*



Comments?  
Send them to  
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