



DIGEST

Around and About

IF THEY haven't taken the day off already, all employees who were on the County payroll between May 14 and June 7, 1976, have only until Jan. 1 to take the holiday they were granted in lieu of the primary election day in June 1976, which the legislature eliminated as a holiday.

THE BOARD of Supervisors has authorized buying 15 cars equipped with air bags for the County fleet to test the bags' effectiveness. But it looks as if the safety experiment will have to wait a while. The road department has found nobody is manufacturing cars with air bags these days. Detroit is under federal orders to get around to it by 1982.

IN OTHER action, the Board voted, 4 to 1, to retain the unified health services department as it is, rather than separating it into the four independent departments that existed before the September 1972 merger.

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MILEAGE PAYMENT SYSTEM UPHELD

THE COUNTY's present system of reimbursing employees on a per-mile basis for using their cars on County business has been upheld by the California court of appeal.

The decision (Oct. 12) reversing an earlier ruling by Superior Judge Harry L. Hupp, was a setback for some employee unions that had been seeking a higher rate of reimbursement.

Legal arguments revolved around County charter section 53, requiring that an employee compelled to travel in line of duty "shall be reimbursed for his actual necessary expenditures for transportation."

Court of appeal justices Lester W. Roth, Macklin Fleming, and Edwin L. Beach found unanimously that the County reimbursement system is "neither arbitrary nor unfair." They noted that the setting of reimbursement levels by the Board of Supervisors is a legislative act and that "legislative discretion is, absent certain circumstances, not subject to judicial control and supervision . . . Courts should not substitute their opinions for an informed decision knowledgeably made . . . by a legislative body on a subject within its legal authority."

The County pays permittees 14 cents a mile for the first 300 miles they drive a month on County business, 13 cents a mile for the next 550 miles a month, and 7 cents for each mile thereafter. These rates are based on a new intermediate size car with a driving life of five years and having an eight-cylinder engine, power steering, power brakes, automatic transmission, radio, and heater.

The court of appeal noted that a 1975 survey by the CAO found that

the per-mile cost of operating a standard car was 11 cents a mile for the first 1,200 miles a month and 6 cents for each mile beyond that.

The CAO also found that the County's per-mile reimbursement rate was higher than that of other public agencies surveyed.

Union attorneys, after failing to obtain a rehearing of the mileage case from the court of appeal, said they will ask the California supreme court to consider the case.

IN ANOTHER decision (Oct. 6), the state court of appeal ruled that before the County civil service commission adopts rules relating to layoffs or mandatory reductions in lieu of layoffs, the commission must "meet and confer" with the affected employees or their representatives.

The court action involved rule amendments the commission had adopted March 3, 1976.

The County is appealing this decision to the California supreme court.

A Brisk Business

MORE THAN 14,000 County employees took advantage of the recent open enrollment period to sign up for the first time for one of the four County-sponsored health plans, or to add coverage for members of their families, or to switch from one plan to another.

County-sponsored plans include Kaiser, Blue Cross, Blue Shield, and Ross-Loos, plus a hospital-care-only plan.

The County subsidizes each employee's health insurance up to a maximum of \$103.58 a month,

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Holidays in 1978

COUNTY EMPLOYEES will have eight three-day weekends in 1978 under the schedule of holidays announced by the department of personnel. Holidays will be:

<i>New Year's Day</i>	Monday, Jan. 2
<i>Lincoln's Birthday</i>	Monday, Feb. 13
<i>Washington's Birthday</i>	Monday, Feb. 20 (<i>always third Monday in February</i>)
<i>Memorial Day</i>	Monday, May 29 (<i>always last Monday in May</i>)
<i>Independence Day</i>	Tuesday, July 4
<i>Labor Day</i>	Monday, Sept. 4 (<i>always first Monday in September</i>)
<i>Columbus Day</i>	Monday, Oct. 9 (<i>always second Monday in October</i>)
<i>Veterans' Day</i>	Friday, Nov. 10
<i>Thanksgiving Day</i>	Thursday, Nov. 23 (<i>always fourth Thursday in November</i>)
<i>Christmas</i>	Monday, December 25

The County observes holidays as designated in sections 6700 and 6701 of the state Government Code. Thus, whenever a holiday falls on a Sunday, as do New Year's Day and Lincoln's Birthday in 1978, the following Monday becomes a holiday. Whenever a holiday falls on a Saturday, it is not treated as a holiday with the single exception of Veterans' Day, which is observed on the preceding Friday. Admission Day, Sept. 9, falls on a Saturday next year and therefore will not be observed as a County holiday.

HEALTH PLANS

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which is enough to cover all present premiums.

When the two-week enrollment period opened Oct. 3, some 5,348 permanent, fulltime County workers were eligible to enroll as first-time subscribers. All but 1,036 of them did.

Among workers already enrolled, 4,276 added coverage for dependents. Another 6,008 transferred from one plan to another.

The personnel department reports that the new enrollees bring to nearly 70,000 the number of employees covered by County-sponsored health plans.

The next open enrollment period will be in October 1978.

It's Up Again

THE SOCIAL security tax will continue its upward climb Jan. 1. At last report from Washington, the rate will increase to 6.05 percent each for both employee and the

County on all salary up to \$17,700 a year, making a maximum social security tax for the employee of \$1,070.85 in 1978.

This year the rate has been 5.85 percent on the first \$16,500 earned for a maximum tax of \$965.25.

Letters

To THE DIGEST:

The personnel department has received many questions recently about when an employee may take paid time off to take a civil service examination.

Section 240(2) of the salary ordinance says any employee shall continue to be paid when he is absent from work to participate in a CS examination for a County position, including those in the courts or marshal's office. Paid time also is allowed when the hiring department invites the applicant for a job placement interview, or if the official CS bulletin requires filing a job application in person.

However, the employee must go

Enrollment Open For Deferred Comp

ANY PERMANENT, fulltime employee who wishes to join the County's deferred compensation plan for 1978 has until Dec. 30 to file the required forms.

The plan, which began two years ago, permits an employee to have 5 percent to 20 percent (the employee chooses the percentage) of his salary impounded in a "tax shelter" reserve. When he leaves County service, he begins withdrawing the deferred compensation and any interest it may have earned. As it is withdrawn, the money becomes taxable.

The 1,300 employees currently enrolled in the plan have until Dec. 30 to alter the percentage of their compensation being deferred.

Forms and information about the plan are available at each department's personnel or payroll office, or from the County treasurer's office, room 434, Hall of Administration, telephone 974-2082.

on his own time to hunt for job vacancies, or to be interviewed about obtaining a transfer or administrative reassignment or taking a voluntary reduction. For these purposes an employee may take time off without pay or use accrued overtime or vacation.

In all cases of absence, paid or unpaid, the employee must notify his immediate supervisor ahead of time and obtain his approval for the absence.

HERBERT KAPLAN
Chief deputy director,
Personnel

County of Los Angeles

DIGEST

EDITORIAL BOARD

HARRY HUFFORD, Chief Administrative Officer/Director of Personnel

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Editorial Office: Room 526, Hall of Administration, 222 North Grand Avenue, Los Angeles 90012
Telephone 974-2490