

# OYA *In the Loop*

**October 22, 2008**

I know that the vast majority of OYA's employees work hard and come to work every day focused on our mission. However, it has come to my attention that some OYA staff may not be following the provisions of state law and OYA policy in relation to conducting private business in the workplace. As interim director, I am notifying you that conducting personal business in the workplace has never been allowed by policy and that policy will be strongly enforced.

More specifically, law and policy prohibit:

- Using a state phone to conduct private business.
- Using state email to conduct private business.
- Using a state car for private business purposes.
- Conducting private business on state time.
- Doing private business-related paperwork on state time.
- Bringing to work, or storing at work, equipment or document related to a private business.

Employees have many interests and activities outside the workplace – that's an important part of who we are. But employees must take care that outside business interests do not cross the line into the workplace. There are a couple of areas that are of particular concern.

Oregon's ethics statute (ORS 244.040) states, in part, "a public official may not use or attempt to use official position or office to obtain financial gain." OYA rules hold that anyone using state resources to engage in private business will face disciplinary consequences. You are all public officials under the definition in the state's ethics laws. Using your position in any way to obtain financial gain is a clear violation of the ethics statutes.

What you choose to do on your own time is your own business – unless it violates agency and state policies or legal boundaries. When you are working, you are here to serve the people of Oregon. You need to be focused on your job, and outside endeavors should not interrupt your work or distract you from your work and this agency's mission.

Recently, I have had several people speak to me about employee involvement, including the recruitment of colleagues, into pyramid-like operations. In addition, the Department of Justice, the Ethics Commission and the Governor's Office have heard that OYA employees are involved with pyramid-like operations such as Quixtar (aka Quickstar), Monavie, Amway and other "multi-level marketing" companies. Making contact with others in the workplace about these businesses or using workplace relationships to

advance these businesses is using your role as a public official for personal gain. This is a conflict of interest and cannot and will not be tolerated.

When employees engage in non-work related activities in the workplace it is, at a minimum, a distraction from our mission. More problematic, such behavior can create conflicts of interest, perceptions of unfairness and dishonesty, and work place morale issues. Employees who violate these laws are subject to appropriate discipline.

Thanks for taking this seriously. Now let's focus on our mission and our strengths as an organization. Together, we can make this a great organization and do remarkable things for the youth we serve.