

February 1, 2012

Dear State of Kansas Appropriations Committee,

My name is Rick Cleveland. Up until July 1, 2011, I was the Park Manager for the KS Dept of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism at Lovewell State Park in north central KS. Lovewell, I am proud to say, has been one of Kansas most progressive state parks over the last 25 yrs when you evaluate its visitation, sales, special events, leading role in camping cabins, and overall park and statewide (Geo Cache, C-dock boat ramp, lantern holder, picnic tables design, etc.) accomplishments.

I began working at Lovewell for KS Park and Resources Authority on April the 15th of 1971 as a seasonal maintenance person. On February 18 of 1974 I was hired as Lovewells first maintenance FTE. From that time on (a little over 40 years now, 37 FTE) I have worked under many different State job classification. I have basically been a maintenance man, LE Park Ranger/CO, Field Supervisor/Park Manager. I have taken part in seeing and assisting this Department through 3 different name changes in the last 40 years. During this period I have received many different statewide awards for my dedication and progressive management achievements. Lovewells management practices, special projects and events alone, has saved and/or produced hundreds of thousands of dollars for the State of Kansas while under my management.

I have always taken great pride in promoting the great state of Kansas, KDWP&T and Lovewell State Park. I hope to be able to continue promoting them for the rest of my life, but as of August 2 of 2011 (approximately one month from my retirement date) I feel the State of Kansas, and/or KDWP&T has WRONGED me in a very big way. When it announced that Voluntary Retirement Incentive would be available from August 2-September 19, and I was advised that I had retired approximately 30 days too soon.

I do not think (or I can only hope) that anyone in KDWP&T administration would of kept this information from me. The bottom line is it means a difference of approximately \$30,000 in my retirement to have my health insurance provided. To miss this benefit by 30 days or less when you have been consistently rated as an exceptional employee, and worked for someone for over 40 years of your life, I feel is simply unjustifiable.

After 40 years of actively taking part of developing new programs and incentives, I'm sure this retirement incentive did not get approved and passed in less than 30 days. An incentive with this magnitude/impact on any State of Kansas retiree should have been announced at least 90 days prior, should have started at the first of a calendar year, or first of a fiscal year.

I am seeking assistance from you in correcting what I and many of Lovewells constituents feel is a very unjustifiable Wrong!

Thank You

Rick Cleveland
Retired
Lovewell State Park Manager