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The policy that eschews gifts from outside vendors and contractors is valid throughout the year but never more so than during the holiday season, when glad tidings from contractors, vendors and business associates attempt to make their way down Metro's chimney. Above, Chief Ethics Officer Karen Gorman reminds us that these gifts make the holidays a little brighter for someone in need: Gifts ranging in value from \$10 to about \$150 or more are bundled up and distributed to various charities each week.

## The Gifts That Keep on Giving

**Ethics Department rebundles gifts from outside vendors and contractors for local A-rated human services charities.**

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Dec. 9, 2008) Chief Ethics Officer Karen Gorman encourages any employee who receives a gift from an outside company to avoid the appearance of conflict of interest by turning it over to the Ethics Office.

Under the law a gift from a contractor and those doing business with a public agency such as Metro must be returned or donated to a charity. In such instances, the Ethics Department can collect the gifts from

employees and donate the items to charity, and provide the employees with records of the transaction.

"We do this as a service to our employees to make it easier for them to comply with the law, to do something nice for a person in need, and help maintain Metro's credibility with the public," said Gorman.

"When employees learn how happy these gifts makes someone in need, it's a very rewarding experience worth far more than the gift itself," said Gorman.

The gift policy is in effect the whole year round.

The [Employee Code of Conduct](#), which can be accessed on the Ethics & Lobbyist web pages from the "Select a Department"

drop-down menu on the myMetro.net homepage, includes a description of the gift rules in Section 5-15-130.

The purpose of the rule on gifts, according to the Code, is "to assure the public that public employees are not influenced to show favoritism to a contractor based on receiving gifts or for being rewarded for doing his or her job in a way that will benefit the giver of the gift."