



GIPSA News

A newsletter for the employees of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

January 2007

2006 Administrator's Awards

Jim Link

It's my pleasure to announce the recipients of the 2006 Administrator's Awards. This year's recipients were recognized for their commitment to furthering GIPSA's mission, their dedication as public servants, and their noteworthy contributions to difficult projects and situations. This year, the recipients were recognized for their work on teams and displaying their commitment to producing the highest quality work, and finding the best solutions under common goals. Each made significant contributions to bettering the agency and I am honored to congratulate each of them on a job well done. The 2006 Administrator's Awards recipients are:

DISTINGUISHED AWARD

Organizational Assessment Improvement Teams

After receiving the OPM survey results, these employees worked tirelessly to develop quality recommendations for management's use in addressing agency concerns.

Frieda Achtenuch, Brian Burk, Herple Ellis, Catherine Grasso, Mary Heisey, Jay Johnson, Jason Lopez, Gary May, Julie Shamblin, Janell Smalts, Clarence Abrom, Susan Fall, Ronald Hill, Mai Ho, Ray Kirkpatrick, Ray Lavine, Robert Lijewski, Idelisse Rodriquez, Angela Roper, and Tandace Scholdberg.

SUPERIOR AWARDS **GIPSA Rice Team Team**

For their exemplary professionalism and dedication in rapidly responding to the needs of the rice industry, when the presence of genetically engineered LibertyLink rice threatened to disrupt trade.

Outstanding Commitment over many months: **Daishia Burton, Ronald Jenkins, John Pitchford, Lynn Polston, Tandace Scholdberg, and Luke Shokere.**

Initial contributions: **Larry Freese, Ganga Murthy, Tim Norden, Marianne Plaus, Henry Greenwood, Frank Jackson, George**

Banks, Regina Landry, Pamela Bourque, and Wayne Melvin.

Support to rice team for special needs and projects: **Eddie Clark, Don Kendall, Dave Morris, Eric Jabs, Robert Lijewski, Mike Johnson, Dannye Cameron, Dave Grady, Gary Erskine, Al Broussard, Kerry Petit, Jim Brown, James Holmes, Clyde Steves, Bill Strickland, Jacky Clements, and Phil Meachem.**

Excellence in Service Delivery; **New Orleans Field Office**

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina these people provided outstanding service to the grain industry and were inadvertently left off the larger group award earlier this year.

Joycelyn Ballard, Rhonda Edwards, Constance Grows, James Holmes, and Charles Trevillion.

Continued, see Administrator's Awards on page 3.

Names in the News

PERSONNEL

Janine Goodson joined the Field Management Division's Office of the Director on December 10, 2006. **Janine** is located at the Beacon Facility in Kanas City, and her phone number is (816) 823-4640. **Janine** will be working closely with **Diane Palecek** on the GIPSA's Application Modernization (GAM) applications and will serve as FMD's GAM Program Administrator.

FAREWELL

After 11 years with P&SP, **Sheila Davis** is leaving to be a claims examiner with the Department of Labor. **Sheila** started working for P&SP in August 1995. She has served as a secretary in the Livestock Marketing Division with **John Edmond**; in the Financial Branch of the Office of Policy and Litigation Support with **Larry Buchanan**; in the Office of

Field Operations with **Dan VanAckeren**; in the Regional Operations Division (ROD) with **Bill Crutchfield** (she especially enjoyed the teamwork in ROD); and ended her P&SP career as a secretary in the Policy Litigation Division with **Brett Offutt**. **Sheila** is a graduate of Elizabeth City State University, with a degree in sociology. Prior to joining P&SP, she worked for Blue Cross/Blue Shield. **Sheila's** husband, **Ralph**, retired from the Department of Commerce in 2005. Through the years, we in P&SP have watched her daughters **Sheena** and **Tenille** grow. On December 6, 2006, co-workers honored her with a farewell party that touched **Sheila** deeply. She is happy the change in her career, but will miss the many nice people she met and worked with in P&SP.

Deirdre Holder, Compliance Division, has accepted a job with the Farm Service Agency after 6 years with GIPSA and 16 years with Mar-

keting and Regulatory Programs. She will start her new job on January 22.

RETIREMENTS

Paul Hadyka, **Brian McKee**, and **Pat LaCour** Field Management Division, Washington, DC, all retired on January 3. **Paul** and **Pat** both had 32 years of Federal service; and **Brian** had 36 years

AWARDS

Steven Burton, physical scientist, Technical Services Division, received a Spot Award for significant effort in automating the Moisture Group Checktesting data entry form. This automation increases the efficiency and accuracy of the checktesting program.

Patricia Jackson, physical scientist, and **Valerie Collins**, physical scientist technician, TSD, each received a time-off award for extraordinary leadership in coordinating the TSD Combined Federal Campaign.

Dale Phetteplace, agricultural grader, TSD, received a spot award for resourcefulness and devotion demonstrated toward furthering the efficiency and effectiveness of GIPSA's future quality control program.

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Albert Conerly Named MSS Director

EEO/CIVIL RIGHTS

For promoting equal opportunity principals, recruiting qualified individuals, and establishing diverse teams.

Marianne Plaus, Don Kendall, and Tim Norden

NON-GIPSA SUPPORT

Chiou Mey Perng agricultural specialist, Agriculture Affairs Section, American Institute in Taiwan; **Ann Liew**, administrative assistant, American Embassy, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia were both recognized for their outstanding support of GIPSA's international activities.

Brian Zingler, MRP-APHIS FSO, was recognized for his dedication to providing human resource support when GIPSA's management and employees were faced with workload changes.

My thanks to all who participated in this year's program, and congratulations to these distinguished recipients for their exemplary performance!

Employee Assistance Program

Call for confidential help.

Washington, DC personnel, call...
301-570-3900
or 1-800-222-0364

Field personnel, call...
1-800-222-0364

Albert Conerly has joined the GIPSA team as Director of the new Management Support Staff (MSS). MSS will be providing "shared services" GIPSA-wide, including management controls, training, labor/management relations, A-76 and FAIR Act, outsourcing, human capital management, Freedom of Information and Privacy Act, administrative support, safety and health, Continuity of Operations Planning, and issuance and regulatory management.

For the past 2 years, **Albert** was a Team Leader in Resource Management at the Department of Energy. His responsibilities included organizational performance goals, objectives, and milestones, quality assurance, Federal Managers Financial Integrity Act, A-76 activities, FOIA, Privacy Act, travel, training, information collection, mail services, space, property requisitions, and inventory, management studies, safety, and records and form management.

Prior to his time at the Department of Energy, **Albert** worked as a Management Analyst with the National Institute of Standards and Technology where he was responsible for management studies, internal control systems, reporting requirements, OIG and GAO audit management, and A-76 studies.

He began his government career with the Federal Emergency Management Agency as a Program Specialist. While there, **Albert** specialized in training standards and development, customer service, and performance measures.

Albert received a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy from the University of Minnesota, a Masters in Public Administration and Public Policy Analysis from American University, and a Masters of Divinity Degree from Howard University School of Divinity.

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

Basic Travel Charge Card Reminders. All GIPSA employees who travel two or more times per year must apply for and use the Government-issued travel card. The card is to be used for official business expenses only and is intended to lessen the financial burden of an employee traveling away from their official duty station. Use the card to pay for official travel expenses to the maximum extent possible. Do NOT use the travel card for registration fees, supplies, personal non-travel related expenses, common carrier transportation for another employee, travel or motel accommodations for another employee, common carrier transportation from a commercial vendor/travel agent, etc.

You are liable for all charges incurred, regardless whether they exceed the amount that can be claimed for reimbursement. Secure your card and account number, and exercise the same care and responsibility of the card as you would any other charge card. Dispute any questionable charges on your monthly immediately with Bank of America. Report a lost or stolen card as soon as possible to Bank of America at 1-800-472-1424.

FGIS Management News

Dave Shipman, Washington, DC

On November 27 and 29, the FGIS Executive Management Team met in Washington, DC. **John Giler, John Pitchford, John Sharpe, Steve Tanner, and I** met to identify program and organizational changes that we should pursue over the next 2 years to strengthen FGIS operations. Among the items reviewed by the team were a Quality Assurance & Quality Control Report (September 29, 2006); APHIS' Review of FGIS Headquarters Structure and Staffing (October 26, 2006), the Organizational Assessment Survey FGIS Supervision Action Team Report (November 2006); GAM development and deployment plans; and the Agency's Workforce and Succession Plans. Based on years of planning and a thorough review of available data, the team reached the following decisions.

PROGRAM SUPPORT. We are going to station FGIS employees from all divisions in the Kansas City area to support field operations, provide program analysis and procedures development, conduct compliance related activities, and manage quality control and assurance activities. We have found that it is more effective to recruit and retain highly qualified staff in the Kansas City area than in Washington, DC. As attrition reduces staffing in Washington, DC, and in domestic field offices, an increasing number of staff positions will be filled in the Kansas City area. The Washington Headquarters Staff will continue to serve as the primary policy staff with the supplemental support staff located in Kansas City. Program sup-

port from the Kansas City area will fall into four basic areas:

1. Operations Support Center – Field Management Division (FMD) will establish a Kansas City Operations Support Center with approximately 5 FTEs to (1) supervise and work with official agencies, providing procedural and policy guidance to ensure their successful operation; (2) manage new web-based program applications related to service delivery; and (3) provide administrative and program support to all field offices. The Operations Center will assume the responsibilities of the Cedar Rapids, Minneapolis, and Wichita/Kansas City Field Offices over a 3-year period as attrition impacts those offices. The Operations Center will also establish a "Resident Agent" program that will strategically place FGIS representatives throughout the interior market to provide a more local presence of Federal personnel supervising and assisting official inspection operations

2. Program Analysis and Procedure Development – The current Policies and Procedures Branch and Market Analysis and Standards Branch will station some staff in the Kansas City area on a case-by-case basis. Today, 4 FTEs from these branches are in Kansas City.

3. Compliance Activities – Compliance Division staff (auditors and investigators) also will be stationed in Kansas City on a case-by-case basis. The Compliance Division currently maintains 2 FTEs in the Kansas City

area and 4 additional FTEs in remote locations.

4. Quality Control and Assurance – FMD will retain responsibility for the overall quality performance of the official service providers and will establish a "Quality Assurance and Control Staff" (QACS) in Kansas City. The staff will rely on quality information provided by TSD to measure the quality of service delivered by official service providers – export field offices, domestic AMA service delivery field offices, official agencies, cooperators, and contractors. Initially, this staff will include 4 FTEs.

The staff members, who currently are at the Beacon facility or remote locations, will be collocated with other GIPSA staff at a new or renovated GIPSA center in Kansas City by 2009.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT. Changes will be made in how we provide technical support to field operations.

1. The Technical Services Division (TSD) will expand grading and testing services to support FMD's Quality Assurance and Control Staff and Operations Center. These additional grading and testing services will be integrated into TSD to capitalize on efficiencies available by collocating development, monitoring, and official service delivery testing and grading functions. Five FTEs will be added in FY 2007 to begin this expansion effort.

See FGIS Update on page 5.

FGIS Update, from page 4.

These employees will be assigned initially to the FMD Quality Control and Assurance Staff at the Beacon facility, and will provide grading and testing services to monitor the performance of official agencies and field offices. Once the new GIPSA center opens, these 5 FTEs will transfer to TSD.

2. Compliance Activities — The Management Team agreed that the scope of FGIS compliance activities would be expanded to cover all FGIS activities, not just official agency and field office functions. The Compliance Division, with personnel stationed in DC and KC, will audit all FGIS activities (field and headquarters), and conduct investigations as necessary. The Management Team decided to keep responsibility for delegations and designations of official agencies in the Compliance Division.

NEW GIPSA FACILITY. FGIS will acquire new or renovated space to collocate all FGIS activities in the Kansas City area by 2009. The new facility will house the new FMD Operations Staff, FMD policies and procedures staff representatives, Compliance Division representatives, the new FMD QACS, and the Technical Service Division. The new or renovated facility will also (1) improve the current laboratory space, (2) enhance the space devoted to training and market development (e.g., trade team briefings) and (3) establish a command center for GIPSA Continuity of Operations Planning.

When completed and staffed, the new or renovated facility will provide USDA an opportunity to showcase American agriculture and the official grain inspection system.

The Management Team will meet again in mid-January.

Are EEO/CR issues or concerns affecting your employment with GIPSA? Do you have questions? Need help? Call the EEO Advisory Committee at...

1-800-639-5167

Civil Rights Hotline

LDP Kicks Off

Rosemary Mayne, Washington, DC

The following employees have been selected to participate in the 2007 Leadership Development Program. The program will provide the processes, structure, and opportunity for participants to assess their individual leadership developmental needs; plan learning activities; practice and improve leadership skills; explore the dimensions of leadership with experts and colleagues; learn skills they can use now and in the future; and build networks for future collaboration.

Bailey, Terrell	New Orleans
Bowen, Frank	Denver
Chinnaswamy, Rangan	Kansas City
Cummings, Margaret	Des Moines
Fast, Adam	Des Moines
Grasso, Catherine	Washington, DC
Hill, Ronald	New Orleans
Jabs, Eric	Kansas City
Jackson, Peter	Washington, DC
May, Gary	Des Moines
McCluskey, Patrick	Kansas City
Menking, Joel	Corpus Christi
Pollock, Stephen	Denver
Pounds-Barnett, Gayle	Des Moines
Roesch, Kraig	Denver
Shokere, Luke	Kansas City
Tate, Phillip	Toledo
Thomas, Lynn	Toledo
VerLinden, John	Denver

The participants will begin an intensive year of study on January 8, 2007, in Shepherdstown, WV. Congratulations to all of them!

The Toughest Job You'll Ever Love?

Frank Bowen, WRO Resident Agent in Northern California

According to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System report, as of September 30, 2004, an estimated 518,000 children were in foster care. Foster care is defined in the Code of Federal Regulations as "24-hour substitute care for children outside their own homes." Foster care settings include, but are not limited to, nonrelative foster family homes, relative foster homes, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, and pre-adoptive homes.

That's what it looks like on paper. In reality, foster children are frightened, angry, disillusioned or any combination thereof, plus some. These kids have been separated from their birth parents for reasons that most of them don't understand. All they do know is that their world as it was is no longer the same. From these circumstances, they are delivered to the foster parents.

It is the responsibility of the foster parents to provide these kids with a safe and structured home life and at a minimum provide for the basic necessities. However, I can vouch from personal experience that if you give a little of yourself you end up getting, as well as giving, far more than the "basic necessities" from these kids.

These kids have never had the opportunity to experience so many of the little things we take for granted. It can be simple things such as birthday cakes, going to the movie theatre, or buying new clothes or Christmas presents. As a foster parent, being able to share in these first time experiences with these kids is rewarding beyond words. You're helping to

make memories these kids will treasure forever.

My wife and I have been foster parents, off and on, for over 9 years. The personal reasons for becoming a foster parent are as varied as are individuals. Some folks are empty nesters who aren't quite ready for the nest to be empty; others feel a moral responsibility; and others because they enjoy a house full of kids. The list could go on and on. We got started because we wanted to "foster-to-adopt". This is how we adopted our daughter, by first serving as her foster parents.

Don't mistake what I am saying. Being a foster parent is not all "hearts and flowers". Some of these kids can come with serious issues. Sometimes the environments these kids are removed from is enough to make the toughest person cringe, and it can affect the kids. While I've never had a foster child of this degree, I've heard stories of kids who did not know how to use a fork or spoon, but could give you the recipe for making methamphetamine at home.

The requirements to become a foster parent vary between jurisdictions, but essentially a person needs a certain number of hours training in areas specific to foster care. These hours must be renewed annually. They must be certified in first aid, CPR, and in some circumstances, watersafety. Additionally, their homes must pass initial, annual, and spot inspections.

The ultimate goal of this system is to reunite the parents and children. If the reunification plan with the parents fails then, depending on the circumstances, long-term foster care, emancipation, guardianship, or adoption are alternatives. It has been my experience that while no child wants to be removed from their biological family, what these kids really crave is a structured and loving home life.

So, the toughest job you'll ever love? I guess that depends. For me, this journey has had its ups and downs. Looking back however, there are moments that I treasure. They make me smile just to think upon them, and I would not give them up for anything.

DC Combined Federal Campaign

Rosemary Mayne, Washington, DC

The GIPSA-DC CFC campaign was a huge success. The key workers were enthusiastic and ran five successful events that included a bake sale, a hot dog lunch, a chili cook-off, a silent auction, and a book, CD, and video sale. (See the pictures from several events.) With the pledges of the DC employees plus all these events, we exceeded our goal before the deadline.

Many thanks to **Peggy Smith**, my co-coordinator, and to the keyworkers: **Becca Riese, Candace Hildreth, Regina Ware, Gale Mason, Angela Emrich, Susan Martin, Julie Nelis, and Linda Alston**. Thank you also to all the DC employees who supported and generously contributed to the events.

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Avoid Slipping Your Way to a Winter Accident. When we drag water and ice into the office on our feet and clothing, the danger of slipping and falling increases. It is one of the special safety hazards of winter and inclement weather – but one that is easily preventable with awareness and foresight. Here are a few tips to help you avoid this common winter safety risk.

First, be prepared. Watch the local weather news. If you will be traveling, check out a national forecast to make sure you have the clothing and proper footwear for the weather where you are going. Knowing what to expect is essential for proper preparation. To cut down the risk of slipping on wet indoor surfaces:

- Shorten your stride to maintain your center of balance.
- Walk with your feet pointed slightly outward, creating a stable base.
- Make wide turns at corners.
- Post signs to warn of wet areas.
- Clean up water that drips from your clothing and shoes.
- Be careful of wet shoes on a dry floor. They can be just as slippery as dry shoes on a wet floor.

Reduce the risk of slipping outdoors in inclement weather by:

- Slowing down to give yourself time to react to a change in traction.
- Wearing slip-resistant shoes or over-shoes, and carry your work shoes.
- Wearing sunglasses in ice and snow to help you see possible hazards.

Proper footwear is important. Wear slip-resistant shoes appropriate for your job. Get special sole patterns specifically engineered for slippery work areas, or use abrasive strips to increase traction.

With a little foresight and awareness, you will be able to avoid this common winter accident, and keep from slipping your way into the doctor's office.

Courtesy: 2006 Environmental, Health, and Safety Articles.

GIPSA News is the employee newsletter of the USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration. Send your news, ideas, suggestions, comments, questions, or thoughts for the next issue to:

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by January 25, 2007!

Appreciation

December 21, 2006

Tom Wrenn
USDA/GIPSA/FGIS
Grand Forks, ND

Dear Tom,

Certainly no gift could be more special than food for a needy family at this critical time of year. Therefore, we cannot thank you enough for your recent donations [of 5,853 pounds of dry peas and beans] to the Great Plains Food Bank and those we serve.

Imagine, for a moment, how difficult it would be to enjoy the magic and joy of Christmas, wondering where food for your next meal might come from. But thanks to caring and compassionate friends like you, everyone's cupboards will be stocked with an adequate supply of groceries this holiday season.

With your help, the Great Plains Food Bank will distribute almost six million pounds of food this year for those stricken by poverty and hunger. More than 40,000 people who turn to our network of 240 charitable feeding programs in Fargo-Moorhead and almost eighty other North Dakota communities will have a little brighter Christmas this year thanks to your thoughtfulness and concern for others.

During this season of giving and goodwill, we want you to know that your partnership in our efforts to create a hunger-free community and state is a gift we truly treasure. Thank you for reaching out and lending a helping hand in the true spirit of the holiday season.

May you have a blessed Christmas, knowing that you have given a special gift this year. Not just the gift of food to hungry person, but also the gift of hope for a better new year.

Sincerely,

Steve Sellent, Director
Great Plains Food Bank

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
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AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION
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