



# GIPSA News

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

February 2000

## From My Desk

*Jim R. Baker*

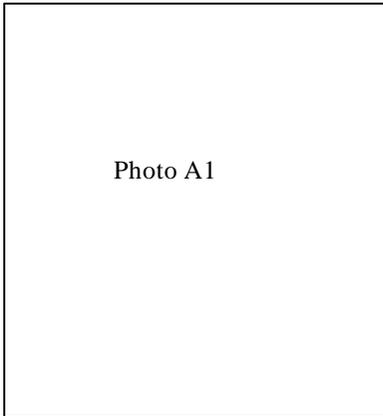


Photo A1

*Administrator Jim Baker*

Once again this year, GIPSA donated admirably to the USDA Food Drive. We have a great tradition of helping others, as we see each year during the Combined Federal Campaign as well as the Department's annual food drive. We collected a great deal of food and money, both in the field and in headquarters. Here's an overview of how we did in this year's food drive:

### GIPSA'S Grand Totals for the USDA 1999 Food Drive

<i>Location</i>	<i>Weight (pounds)</i>	<i>\$ Donation</i>
Washington, DC, HQ	470	\$150
Grain (Field & TSD)	12,063	
Packers (field)	1,470	\$100
<b>GIPSA TOTAL</b>	<b>14,003</b>	<b>\$250</b>

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Thanks to everyone for their generous donations of food and money to the USDA-wide Food Drive. We all should be pleased and proud of the contributions that were made. They will go a long way to help feed the needy all across the country.

# Names in the News

## Personnel

Welcome to **Krimy Almodovar**, marketing specialist, and **Anna Rickett**, economist, Atlanta; **Kristen Corash**, economist, **Mary Miller** and **Arlandos Lee**, auditors, Denver; and **Ralph Bierlen**, economist, Des Moines.

Farewell to **Gloria Bunton**, auditor, Denver, who retired at the end of January; and **Stephaine Harden**, resident agent, Ft. Worth, who accepted a position with the U.S. Postal Service.

## Awards

**Clarence Abrom, Charles Brown, Dean Brown, Lynn Cain, Lee Cooper, Joe Hearns, Craig Hoover, Orval Schleiermacher, Larry Swinson, Alan Wadyko, and Danny Whitten**, League City, received extra effort awards for their exceptional performance as part of a dedicated group of inspectors and technicians in the League City Field Office during extreme workload conditions from March 1999 to October 1999.

**Walter Alves, Wade Berteau, and Yohanna Lorio**, New Orleans, received extra effort awards for their outstanding performance of duties and support of the Automated Cu-Sum Development.

**Ronald Beukema**, Washington, D.C., received an extra effort award for superior performance contributing to the overall effectiveness of the Field Management Division as a member of the APSB senior programming

staff and developer of the FGIS automated shiplot inspection plan (Cu-Sum) system.

**Donald Blalock**, Portland; **Michelle Bosley**, Kansas City; **Donna Burke**, Stuttgart; **Cindy Butz**, Grand Forks; **Erin Dubroc**, New Orleans; **Amelia Gautreau**, New Orleans; **Judy Johnston**, Wichita; **Penny Kilbride**, Grand Forks; **Vicki Kottke**, Moscow; **JoAnna LeBlanc**, New Orleans; **Angela Marine**, New Orleans; **JoAnne Matherne**, New Orleans; **Marsha Morehouse**, Portland; **Diane Palecek**, Kansas City; **Jan Roehler**, Minneapolis; **Angela Roper**, New Orleans; **Brian Teer**, Stuttgart; and **Hannelore Vollmar**, Toledo, received spot awards for outstanding editing and program debugging support in the development of the various forms used in the Laser Certificate Program.

**Timothy Brennan**, resident agent, Jackson, MS, received a time off award for extra effort in planning and conducting a balanced livestock and poultry check weighing investigation program and for professionalism demonstrated by promptly and thoroughly reporting results.

**Gerald Bromley**, IRM coordinator, Washington, DC, received a quality step increase award for performing the duties as IRM Coordinator for the P&S Program in an outstanding manner. He also received an extra effort award for providing technical leadership and support that led to a successful resolution of GIPSA's Y2K problem.

**James Brown, Frank Jackson, Glenda Lasseigne, Kerry Petit, Josh Watson**, New Orleans, re-

ceived performance awards for sustained superior performance as a management team member contributing to the successful operation and delivery of service in the New Orleans Field Office during the past year.

**Gale Calkins, Evert Hastie, Roy Hughes, Craig Johnson, Judy Johnston, George Kincaid, Roy Lyon, Max Peterson, Reynaldo Rosas, Patricia Smith, and William Thomison**, Wichita, KS, received spot awards for their contribution to the Wichita Field Office's processed commodity program and for exhibiting the spirit of teamwork and perseverance necessary to accomplish the field office mission.

**Tina Crane**, Stuttgart, Arkansas, received a spot award for outstanding support in the installation of and on-site training in the use of the Laser Certificate Program at a number of remote rice companies in the Stuttgart circuit.

**Hal Crocker**, marketing specialist, Atlanta, received a quality step increase award for sustained outstanding performance and professionalism in performing poultry program investigations which significantly contributed to the Atlanta regional office trade practice goals.

**David Davis**, economist, Denver, received a performance bonus award for sustained exceptional performance investigating and analyzing competitive issued in the fed cattle industry.

**Mark Dickson**, Washington, D.C., received an extra effort award for sustained superior performance as the System Manager of the FGIS HP-

*Continued, see News  
on page 3.*

**News, from page 2.**

3000 during FY 1999 and for software development of a minicomputer-based Automated Training Information System.

**Warren Dicus**, Washington, D.C., received a time-off award for fixing a vexing computer software problem that enabled the GIPSA Y2K Command Center to effectively communicate with the USDA Coordination Center, thus allowing the Agency to finish the Y2K project started over 2 years ago.

**Richard Frantz**, Toledo, received a time-off award for providing FGIS with hard work and outstanding service during extensive travel and spending weeks working on commodities in Chicago, along with other assignments which required overnight travel with very short notice.

**Bruce Griffith, Tracey Paugh, Steve Rigden** and **Dennis Thalacker**, computer specialists, Washington, DC, and **Jim Vanderwielen**, assistant regional supervisor, Des Moines, received an extra effort awards for outstanding performance as a member of the GIPSA Y2K Remediation Team.

**Ray Hart**, Washington, D.C., received a spot award for providing assistance in resolving PCMS problems between users of the PCMS system and APSB staff during the problem-solving PCMS telecommunication hookup to NFC.

**Anita Heckenbach**, Technical Center, Kansas City, MO, received a spot award for outstanding support of QA/QC NQDB data and development of a computer algorithm that automatically checks all official agency directories on the APSB

server, downloads existing files, deletes files and databases, and scrubs the NQDB data.

**Mary Heisey**, resident agent, Lancaster, received a time off award for extra effort in the timely reinstatement of a grower's contract for one house which had been terminated.

**Jeannene Henehan**, Washington, D.C., received spot awards for outstanding administrative support of the Automation and Program Services Branch during FY 1999, and for providing exceptional customer service to a sign language interpreter who was having difficulty locating a deaf employee and a training classroom.

**Morris Johnson**, Washington, D.C., received an extra effort award for his sustained superior performance as the Agency's TMACO in charge of conversion of the FTS2000 telecommunications contract to the MCI FTS2001 contract. He also received an extra effort award for developing a successful technical solution for remote connection to PCMS, PC-TARE, and other NFC administrative software that allows retirement of the XPERT card, a more stable telecommunications connection, and the ability to print NFC output from local workstations.

**William Kelly**, Washington, D.C., received an extra effort award for sustained superior performance as the FGIS LAN system administrator in charge of the successful conversion of the Agency to a one e-mail mail system. He also received a spot award for solving the PCMS technical problem that kept the field offices from connecting into that critical system at NFC. This was a very subtle

and complex problem and the solution **William** came up with required exceptional tenacity and was technically unique.

**Vicki Kottke**, Moscow, ID, received an extra effort award for performing duties outside recognized Office Support Assistant responsibilities to increase the efficiency of the Moscow Field Office and provide service to our customers.

**Doug Lacefield**, Washington, D.C., received an extra effort award for sustained superior performance as the Project Leader for the QA/QC hardware system updates and for sustained superior performance of office automation duties during FY 1999.

**Robert Lijewski**, Washington, D.C., received a spot award for outstanding support of the Automated Cu-Sum Development relative to the final phases of the component logs function within the program.

**Deborah Mallon**, economist, Denver, received a time off award for dedication and enthusiasm in the 1999 GIPSA food drive.

**Christopher McClure**, resident agent, Roanoke, received a time off award for extra effort in the timely reinstatement of a grower's contract for one house which had been terminated.

**Joe W. Moore**, marketing specialist, Atlanta, received a time off award for extra effort in the timely recovery of \$2,000 plus to growers whose payments were shorted.

*Continued, see More News  
on page 4.*

**More News, from page 3.**

**Irene Omade**, computer specialist, Washington, DC, received an extra effort award for outstanding performance and superior endurance as co-manager of the GIPSA Y2K Remediation Team.

**Norma Phelps**, Washington, D.C., received a spot award for providing critical coordination of PCMS problems between users of the PCMS system and APSB staff during the problem-solving phase of PCMS telecommunication hookup to NFC.

**Diane Reeves**, Washington, D.C., received an extra effort award for sustained superior performance in support of the conversion of the FTS2000 telecommunications contract to the MCI FTS2001 contract.

**Carol Remmers**, Washington, D.C., received an extra effort award for sustained superior performance as the FGIS LAN system administrator for the FGIS GroupWise e-mail system and for outstanding performance of office automation duties during FY 1999.

**Peggy Smith**, management analyst, Washington, DC, received a quality step increase award for performing

her duties in an outstanding manner.

**Creig Stephens**, marketing specialist, Atlanta, received a quality step increase for sustained outstanding performance and professionalism in performing trade practice investigations in the poultry industry and financial investigations in the livestock industry.

**Philip Tate** and **Lynn Thomas**, Toledo, OH, received performance awards for their outstanding performance which exceeded all established elements of their position description.

**Buddy Taylor**, resident agent, Tallahassee, FL, received a time off award for extra effort and professionalism in conducting investigations which included custodial audits, livestock and poultry check weighing, weight transfer and livestock payments using envelope postmark dates.

**Mary Vick** and **Day Huguet**, Kansas City, MO, received spot awards for their administrative support in transferring of items to the Kansas City Field Office from the work-at-home office of an APSB staff member.

## No Limit on Number of Spot Awards

**John Giler**,  
*GIPSA Employee Recognition Committee Chairman,*  
Washington, DC

The Office of Personnel Management no longer requires Federal agencies to limit the number of spot awards an employee can receive within a 1-year period. Therefore, effective immediately, employees can receive more than one \$500 spot award within a 1-year period. Keep in mind, however, spot awards still range in value from \$50 to \$500 and no spot award can exceed \$500. GIPSA Directive 4451.1, dated 6/1/99, will be changed accordingly.

## January Issuance

**Charlie Turner**,  
Washington, DC

- ❑ GIPSA 4451.2 - "Gainsharing Travel Savings Program," 1-2-00



Black History  
Month

February 2000



**Are EEO/CR issues or concerns affecting your employment with GIPSA? Do you have questions? Need help?**

**Then let your voice be heard.**

Call the EEO Advisory Committee at...

**1-800-639-5167**

Civil Rights Hotline





# GIPSA Idea Hotline Update

*Norma Phelps, Washington, DC*

Here are the ideas received on the GIPSA Idea Hotline during January. If you have questions about any ideas or the Hotline, please call me at 202-720-1017.

*Suggestor*

*Suggestion*

Jerry Kuseck, Portland, OR

Certify Insect-Bored Kernels As  
Insect-Damaged Kernels

Judy Johnston, Wichita, KS

Set Up A Travel Management Center  
for Field and Headquarters Offices

Anonymous

Develop Procedure to Let Field Know  
When Internet Access to GroupWise  
Is Down

Sue Ann Claudon, Denver, CO

Update National Bids to Keep  
Information Current

William Braker and

Daniel Gilreath, Toledo, OH

Let Employees Select Shirt Colors in  
the Clothing Program

Susan Mahon, Washington, DC

Modernize FMD's Telephone System

December's tee-shirt winner: **Benny Vitale**, Kansas City, MO!

January's tee-shirt winner: **Jerry Kuseck**, Portland, OR!

## **GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During January 2000**

This list does not necessarily indicate that the idea was implemented as suggested or that it is currently in place (it could be in the development/implementation stage). To avoid the chance of misinterpretation, please call the Hotline if you have any concerns or questions regarding the following list of ideas.

 Develop A Website Where USDA IT Technicians Can Share Information

Keep those ideas coming in! Send your ideas to the GIPSA Idea Hotline via e-mail: [gipsa-ideas@gipsadc.usda.gov](mailto:gipsa-ideas@gipsadc.usda.gov); FAX to 202-720-1015; or telephone 800-455-3447 or 202-720-1013. **We encourage you to send ideas via fax or e-mail to reduce the possibility of transcription errors; however, ideas will be accepted regardless of the method you choose to use.**

# PCMS Reminders

*Norma Phelps and Ray Hart,  
Washington, DC*

This is a reminder that MRP-Business Services has reassigned the LAPC purchase card support for FGIS to **Megan Phommahaxay**, MRP-Business Services, Minneapolis Business Site, 612-370-2499. The LAPC responsibility for P&S will be retained by **Sandra Case**, MRP-BS, Administrative Service Enhancement Unit, Washington, D.C., 202-720-7599.

Always remember, that the cardholder is ultimately responsible for the use of the purchase card and/or convenience checks issued in their name. Each cardholder should have access to or a copy of Departmental Regulation 5013-6 and the PCMS/Micro-Purchase Guide. These two documents are the bible on use and responsibilities related to the cards and checks.

### ***Included in the cardholder responsibilities:***

*... Maintain adequate documentation of all purchase card and convenience check transactions*

*... Reconcile purchase card and convenience check transactions using PCMS in a timely manner, ensure entry of proper accounting codes, budget object classification codes, and, for convenience checks, TINs or SSNs, as appropriate.*

*Continued, see PCMS  
on page 6.*

# Administrative Conference

*Vicki Kottke, Moscow*

During the week of December 6, 1999, an Administrative Conference was held in Washington, D.C. This was the first such meeting in 4 years. Representatives from all field offices, the California and Washington State cooperative offices, and the Beaumont suboffice participated. APHIS staff members were on hand to make presentations on travel, the Purchase Card Management System, and position classification. GIPSA staff members covered a wide range of topics, from automated data processing to Y2K. Presentations were made on employee development, Civil Rights, workers' compensation, budget, and fees and rate codes. The Training Management System introduction and training session was a highlight of the conference. We also were presented with a GroupWise session on WebAccess that will be helpful when

the field offices receive this feature. An open forum with **Dave Shipman** and **Dave Orr** on the last day of the conference capped a very productive week.

While we were unable resolve all the issues raised to everyone's satisfaction, the overwhelming majority of participants thought the conference was well worthwhile and that they should be held more frequently. These conferences allow for better communication and problem solving in both structured and non-structured environments.

The benefits of these conferences extend beyond the specific subjects discussed in the presentations. "The most beneficial part to me was the people I met and talked with. The connections I established with headquarters personnel and my fellow co-workers from the different field offices will forever be useful," stated **Mary Hougan** of the Washington State/Federal Cooperative.

Much of the success for the conference can be directly attributed to the organization and planning of **Norma Phelps**, Field Management Support Staff, and **Rosemary Mayne**, Training Staff. In appreciation of all their hard work the attendees presented them each with a token of our appreciation on the last day of the conference.

photo A2

*Administrative Conference attendees were: from left to right, are (seated) Michelle Bosley, Kansas City MO; Lanita Ford, Baltimore, MD; Donna Hoover, League City, TX; Cynthia Coco, Beaumont, TX; Jan Roehler, Minneapolis, MN; and Mary Hougan, Olympia, WA; and (standing) Judy Hawkins, Portland, OR; Janina Milaknis, Montreal, Canada; Mary Hill, Stuttgart, AR; Glenda Lasseigne, New Orleans, LA; David Orr, Washington, DC; Vicki Kottke, Moscow, ID; Penny Kilbride, Grand Forks, ND; Donna Hillard, Toledo, OH; Susan Russell, Sacramento, CA; and Judy Johnston, Wichita, KS.*

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**PCMS**, from page 6.

A proper paper trail for all purchases **MUST** be maintained by the cardholder **AND** transactions **MUST** be reconciled in PCMS regularly. PCMS users should be sure to change their passwords regularly, so they don't expire.

Your profile accounting should, by now, have been updated to your default FY 2000 management code.

If you have any questions about the use of the card, proper accounting codes or budget object classes, please talk with your supervisor, or contact your LAPC.

## P&S FY 2000 Training

*Durwood Helms, Education and Training Coordinator*

The implementation of the Packers and Stockyards Programs (P&S) reorganization created a need for extensive training. To date, 51 new employees have been hired since July 1998 and many of the 32 resident agents now have more diverse work responsibilities than before the reorganization. In August 1999, P&S senior management decided to conduct extensive training in FY 2000 to better prepare our employees to accomplish the Agency's mission. Responsibility for planning and coordinating P&S FY 2000 training agenda was assigned to the Trade Practices Branch.

FY 2000 training is already underway. During the week of November 1-5, 1999, P&S held a New Employee Orientation and Training Conference for its new employees. At that time, P&S had 43 employees who had been hired since the last new employee conference, which was held in May 1995. Thirty-five of the new employees had been hired since July 1998. The conference was held in Washington, DC.

Two Investigative Interviewing training sessions were conducted for headquarters employees in Washington, DC, by **Roger Pfeifer**, Pfeifer and Associates, Brunswick, GA, on December 8-10 and 13-15, 1999. Before retiring from Federal service, **Mr. Pfeifer** was a Senior Instructor, Behavioral Science Division, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, Glynco, GA.

On February 1-3, 2000, Advanced Management Skills training was conducted in Washington, DC, by the USDA Graduate School. Regional supervisors, assistant regional supervisors, regional unit supervisors, branch chiefs and assistants to the Directors attended this session.

Six two-week Technical, Topical, and Investigative Interviewing training sessions are planned for regional office employees. The training is scheduled in Atlanta, GA, on February 7-18 and April 3-14; Denver, CO, on February 28-March 10 and April 24-May 5; and Des Moines, IA, on March 20-31 and June 5-16. The instructors will be **Paul Peterson**, retired former chief, Scales and Weighing Branch; **Ronny Parkerson**, retired former chief, Financial Protection Branch; **Fred Bridgman**, retired former regional supervisor, Bedford, VA; **John Edmond**, chief, Trade Practices Branch; **Roger Pfeifer**, Pfeifer and Associates; and a representative from the Office of the General Counsel.

Plans are currently being made for a training session on competition to be held May 15-19 for employees assigned to headquarters Competition Branch and for field employees assigned to the regional Competition Units. Economist Incorporated, Washington, DC, will conduct the training. The training site will be determined when the Department's Offsite Events analysis is completed.

Other training will be planned as needed and with available funding.

## GIPSA Proposes Fee Increases

GIPSA has proposed a 2.4 percent increase for fees for official inspection and weighing services performed in the United States under the U.S. Grain Standards Act, as amended; and a 4.8 percent fee increase for Federal rice inspection services performed under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946.

In January 2000, a mandatory salary increase of 4.8 percent for Federal employees went into effect, increasing GIPSA's program costs significantly. According to GIPSA administrator Jim Baker, GIPSA's existing fee schedules will not generate sufficient revenues to cover program costs while maintaining an adequate reserve balance. These increases are needed to cover increased operational costs resulting from the mandatory Federal pay increase.

Written comments on the proposed increase must be submitted on or before March 3, 2000.

### Help when and where you need it...

For confidential assistance, call your Employee Assistance Program

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

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



**Year 2000 Theme: Heritage and Horizons --  
The African-American Legacy  
and the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

*Sharon Williams, African American Program Manager,  
Washington, DC*

**QUIZ: REMEMBERING THE DREAM**

Test your knowledge of some of the key *events* and *happenings* in Black history.

1. In the 1920s, which African-American created and promoted Negro History Week?
  - a. George Washington Carver
  - b. Harriet Tubman
  - c. Carter G. Woodson
  - d. Martin Luther
2. George Washington Carver is best known for cultivating what?
  - a. Cotton
  - b. Peanuts
  - c. Rice
  - d. Wheat
3. When he was a lawyer, what landmark court case did Thurgood Marshall win?
  - a. Roe vs. Wade
  - b. O.J. Simpson vs. the State of California
  - c. Brown vs. the Board of Education
  - d. Plessy vs. Ferguson
4. Thurgood Marshall was the first African-American to sit on the Supreme Court. Which president appointed him?
  - a. Ronald Reagan
  - b. John F. Kennedy
  - c. Dwight Eisenhower
  - d. Lyndon Johnson
5. The NAACP distributes an award for the "highest of noblest achievement by an African-American during the preceding year or years." What is the name of the award?
  - a. The Spingarn Award Medal
  - b. The NAACP Award of Merit
  - c. The Hugo Award
  - d. The CAPI Award
6. Who was the first Black woman from the South to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives and call for the impeachment of Richard Nixon?
  - a. Shirley Chisholm
  - b. Ann Richards
  - c. Barbara Jordan
  - d. Jane Addams
7. Which African-American entertainer began his career at the age of three performing with his father and uncle?
  - a. Bill Cosby
  - b. Spike Lee
  - c. Sammy Davis, Jr.
  - d. Flip Wilson
8. Which civil rights leader has been referred to as the "Black Moses"?
  - a. Malcolm X
  - b. Louis Farrakan
  - c. Harriet Tubman
  - d. Martin Luther King, Jr.
9. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the leader of which boycott, spurred by Rosa Parks?
  - a. The Montgomery Bus Boycott
  - b. The Tallahassee Bus Boycott
  - c. The Oil Boycott
  - d. The Baton Rouge Bus Boycott
10. In 1949, Jackie Robinson was the first Black player to receive what prestigious baseball award?
  - a. The Most Valuable Player Award
  - b. A nomination into the Baseball Hall of Fame
  - c. A retired number
  - d. Sportsman of the year

- Answers:*
1. c. Carter G. Woodson
  2. b. Peanuts
  3. c. Brown vs. the Board of Education
  4. d. Lyndon Johnson
  5. a. The Spingarn Award Medal
  6. c. Barbara Charline Jordan
  7. c. Sammy Davis, Jr.
  8. c. Harriet Tubman
  9. a. The Montgomery Bus Boycott
  10. a. The Most Valuable Player Award

## Black History Month

# February 2000 - Calendar of Events

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
		<b>1</b> 1960: Four NC A&T students stage a sit-in in a Greensboro, NC, dime store, beginning the first of the 1960s sit-ins	<b>2</b> South African President F.W. DeKlerk lifts thirty year ban on the African National Congress.	<b>3</b> 1810: Antonio Ruiz (El Negro Falucho), national hero of Buenos Aires, Argentina, dies for his country.	<b>4</b> 1913: Rosa Parks, initiator of the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott is born.	<b>5</b> 1934: Henry 'Hank' Aaron, homerun king of major league baseball is born.
<b>6</b> 1945: Reggae superstar Bob Marley is born in Jamaica. 1993: Arthur Ashe, tennis player, humanitarian, activist, dies.	<b>7</b> Independence Day - Grenada.	<b>8</b> 1968: Three South Carolina State students are killed during segregation protests in Orangeburg.	<b>9</b> 1965: Martin Luther King, Jr. meets with President Johnson to discuss black voting rights.	<b>10</b> 1927: Leontyne Price, internationally famous opera singer is born in Laurel, MS.	<b>11</b> 1990: Nelson Mandela is released from a South African prison after being detained 27 years as a political prisoner.	<b>12</b> 1896: Isaac Burns Murphy, great American jockey, dies.
<b>13</b> 1923: First black professional basketball team, "The Renaissance", is organized.	<b>14</b> 1817: Frederick Douglas, The 'Great Emancipator', is born.	<b>15</b> 1961: U.S./African nationalists protesting the slaying of Congo premire Patrice Lumumba disrupts U.N. sessions.	<b>16</b> 1970: Joe Frazier knocks out Jimmy Ellis to become world heavy weight champion.	<b>17</b> 1982: Thelonious Monk, jazz pianist and composer dies.	<b>18</b> National Independence Day - Gambia.	<b>19</b> 1919: The first Pan African Congress is held in Paris.
<b>20</b> 1900: J. F. Pickering patents his airship invention.	<b>21</b> 1965: El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X), American black nationalist is assassinated.	<b>22</b> 1967: A.C. Powell Jr., chair, House Committee on Education and Labor, is denied his house seat for 'unbecoming conduct and misuse of funds.'	<b>23</b> 1868: Dr. William Edward Burghardt DuBois is born in Great Barrington, MA.	<b>24</b> 1966 Military leaders oust Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana while he is on a peace mission to stop the Vietnam War.	<b>25</b> 1964: Muhammad Ali defeats Sonny Liston for the world heavyweight boxing championship. 1965: Nat King Cole, singer, pianist, dies.	<b>26</b> 1926: Theodore "Georgia Deacon" Flowers becomes the first black middleweight boxing champion.
<b>27</b> Independence Day - Dominican Republic 1988 Debi Thomas, figure skater, becomes the first black to win a medal at the winter Olympics.	<b>28</b> 1948: Sgt. Cornelius F. Adjetey becomes the first martyr for national independence of Ghana.					

# Welcome to the Personnel Forum!

In this column you will find answers to frequently asked personnel-related questions. We hope you find the information useful and invite you to e-mail general questions on personnel processes, programs & services to [hrfeedback@usda.gov](mailto:hrfeedback@usda.gov). Please continue to consult with your servicing personnelists on questions that are specific to your situation/circumstances.

## Question:

I used to get hard copies of the Human Resources Desk Guide in the mail. Why don't I get copies anymore?

## Answer:

In the past, we distributed hard copies of the Human Resources Desk Guide (HRDG, a resource on personnel procedures and other information needed to fulfill personnel responsibilities) to designated AMS, APHIS & GIPSA supervisors and personnelists across the country. However, we recognized that employees also need access to these materials, and that turnover and reassignments created many problems with distribution lists. We also wanted to take advantage of Internet technology that allows us to get information to even more customers — faster than ever before. These factors led us to make some changes in the way we communicate personnel procedures to supervisors, managers, and employees in MRP.

New HRDG's and updates are no longer printed and distributed in hard copy. Instead, the information is available to all employees and supervisors on the MRPHR home page ([www.aphis.usda.gov/mb/mrphr](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mb/mrphr)) under the "Guides & Directives" button. (There is a link to the desk guide from *inGIPSA's* "Personnel Info" page.) Note: You will notice that while certain issuances are being updated, they aren't posted on the home page yet. In the meantime, employees are asked to refer to their supervisor's or regional office copy, or HR, for a copy of the subchapters that aren't on-line yet.

New and revised issuances are announced in a few ways:

- New materials are listed in the Quarterly Issuance Checklists that are sent to all AMS, APHIS & GIPSA offices.
- The MRPHR home page includes 2 places that alert employees to new HRDG & Directive material: under "Hot/New" and under "Guides & Directives / What's New."
- "Issued" and "Revised" dates are included on the general HRDG Table of Contents, and within the text (beside the updated information) of the home page material.

Please continue using the HRDG as a resource in fulfilling your personnel responsibilities, and contact your servicing personnel specialist whenever assistance is needed.

# Travel Bits & Pieces

*Peggy Smith,  
Washington, DC*

The Department of Defense made changes to the Outside Continental United States (OCONUS) Rates. Room taxes will no longer be included in the rate and should be claimed as miscellaneous expenses. This change was effective for travel performed on or after January 1, 2000.

Federal Travel Regulation Amendment 88, concerning the mileage rate for privately owned vehicles, increased the mileage rate from 31 cents to 32.5 cents per mile effective for travel performed on or after January 14, 2000.

These changes have been incorporated into the Federal Travel Regulations and are available for downloading at :

[www.policyworks.gov](http://www.policyworks.gov).

**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:

### **Dana Stewart**

USDA, GIPSA, Stop 3601  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-3601  
Phone (202) 720-5091  
FAX (202) 205-9237  
[dstewart@gipsadc.usda.gov](mailto:dstewart@gipsadc.usda.gov)

**by February 25, 2000!**

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR  
USDA, GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS  
AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION  
STOP 3601  
1400 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE, SW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20250-3601

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