



# GIPSA News

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

February 2006

## From the Administrator

*Jim Link*

### Civil Rights Policy Statement

As your Administrator, I am firmly committed to ensuring that GIPSA adheres to all Federal civil rights laws, regulations, rules, policies, and procedures. I fully support GIPSA’s compliance with civil rights and equal employment opportunities for all employees regardless of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, family, marital, or parental status, political beliefs, protected genetic information, or sexual orientation.

There is no principle more important. We must comply with every aspect of our Nation’s civil rights laws. To do otherwise is simply not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

All GIPSA employees, especially managers and supervisors, are expected to support and comply with the Secretary’s Civil Rights Policy Statement and the principles underlying that statement.

Furthermore, I expect support for GIPSA’s policy on Equal Employment Opportunity and for ensuring that the workplace is free of discrimination. All personnel practices, including recruitment, selection, training, promotion, and transfers are required to be free of discrimination. Reprisal of any kind will not be tolerated.

GIPSA will promptly pursue appropriate disciplinary action against any employee who engages in unlawful discrimination.

With your help and commitment, we can create a better workplace for all employees and an Agency that delivers programs and services fairly and with equality and integrity.

I look forward to fulfilling this vision — our goals — together.

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**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**

# Names in the News

## PERSONNEL

**Deirdre Holder**, formerly with the P&SP Policy and Litigation Division, joined the FGIS Compliance Division as a regulatory analyst.

**Doug Lacefield** was reassigned from the Information Technology Staff to the Field Management Division's Office of the Director.

**Kerry Petit** is the new manager of the New Orleans Field Office. **Kerry** brings with him a tremendous amount of management and leadership experience to help guide the field office into the future.

**Marianne Plaus** has been temporarily promoted to the position of deputy director, Field Management Division. During **Marianne's** temporary promotion to deputy director, **Pat McCluskey** has been temporarily promoted to chief of the Market Analysis and Standards Branch. These promotions are effective January 8, 2006, through April 29, 2006.

**Rebecca Riese**, agricultural marketing specialist, has joined the Field Management Division's Market Analysis and Standards Branch in Washington, DC. **Becca** is a Nebraska native,



growing up on a small family farm outside of Holstein, Nebraska. She is a 2005 graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness. (Go Huskers!) During college, she worked for USDA Rural Development State

Office in Nebraska for a year and a half and interned with GIPSA in DC during the summer of 2005. **Becca** is very glad to be back working in DC as a member of the MASB staff.

## RETIREMENTS

**Ray Hart**, Field Management Division, retired on February 3. After 3 years in the Army, **Ray** went to work for the Toledo Board of Trade, which was an official agency prior to the establishment of FGIS in 1976. He joined the FGIS Toledo field office in 1977 as an agricultural commodity grader. In 1979, he transferred to Baltimore as a shift supervisor, and later became the assistant field office manager and acting manager for a period of time. In 1986, he joined the Automation and Program Services Branch in Washington, DC. At that time, FGIS owned about 6 IBM PC-XT microcomputers. **Ray** returned to Field Management Division in 1989, working in the Office of the Director until his retirement. During his tenure in FMD, **Ray** led the field computer upgrade project for Y2K and was co-webmaster for more than a decade. **Ray** has been active for many years with the American Legion and Harley Owners Group and intends to continue with those organizations.

## AWARDS

**Ron Beukema**, Information Technology Staff, Washington, DC, received a certificate of merit for

exceptional performance in developing the new web site of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration.

**Bill Burden**, Chemist, TSD, received a Spot Award for extraordinary effort and dedication in ensuring the mission of TSD and GIPSA continues in excellence through operations in the Combustion Nitrogen Analyzer laboratory.

**Rangan Chinnaswamy**, chemist, TSD, received a Certificate of Merit in recognition of his outstanding leadership in the development of GIPSA end-use functionality programs.

**James Doak**, **Roy Lyon**, **Kenneth Weaver**, and **James Whalen**, Wichita, Kansas, Field Office, received performance awards for their exceptional contribution in accomplishing the consolidation of the Wichita and Kansas City field offices, thus increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the GIPSA mission and the Wichita field office.

**Brenda Evans**, Physical Scientist Technician, TSD, received a Spot Award for extraordinary effort and dedication in completing assignments while maintaining daily work necessary to ensure the mission of TSD and GIPSA continues in excellence.

**Ray Hart**, Field Management Division, received a certificate of merit for more than 10 years of sustained and exceptional performance in developing, maintaining, and improving the web sites of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration.

*Continued, see Names  
on page 3.*

Names, from page 2.

**Roy Hughes, Judy Johnston, and Mary Vick**, Wichita, Kansas, Field Office, received spot awards for their exceptional contribution in accomplishing the consolidation of the Wichita and Kansas City field offices, thus increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the GIPSA mission and the Wichita field office.

**Don Kendall**, deputy director, TSD, received a certificate of merit for his significant contributions that were above and beyond what was required of his position.

**John Roush and Tracy Gerke**, computer specialists, TSD, each received a spot award for creating a Crystal report for the Export Cargo database. This program was designed with virtually no notice and in an exceptionally competent and timely manner.

**Marsha Schwartz**, secretary, TSD, received a spot award in recognition for her efforts in proving full secretarial and on-time administrative services to TSD with a 33 percent reduction in secretarial staff.

**Tom Weber**, physical scientist, TSD, received a spot award for troubleshooting a problem on the Benchmate and resolving the issues preventing the use of the instrument. **Tom** completed this project with virtually no notice and in an exceptionally competent and timely manner.

## Larry Haller on Detail to Justice

**Larry Haller**, economist, Industry Analysis Division, P&SP, has been selected to work with the Antitrust Division of the Department of Justice (DOJ) on a 4-month detail. **Larry** began the assignment January 30, 2006.

While he is at DOJ, **Larry** will be working on refinements to the econometric model and associated procedures that P&SP uses to monitor fed cattle prices, especially with respect to how to analyze Agricultural Marketing Service firm-level data. **Larry** will also be involved in case work while at DOJ. He will present a seminar at DOJ at the completion of his assignment.

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## Travel Bits & Pieces

*Peggy Smith, Washington, DC*

**Updated Per Diem Rates.** The General Services Administration (GSA) has reviewed the lodging rates for the District of Columbia, as well as certain non-standard locations in the States of Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Tennessee, and Texas, using more current lodging industry data, as well as data on where Federal travelers actually stay when visiting these locations. Also, GSA has reviewed the meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) rate of certain non-standard locations in the States of Illinois, Michigan, Montana, and New Mexico. Finally, GSA is combining Stateline, Nevada with Carson City, Nevada (currently a standard continental United States (CONUS) location), so Carson City's per diem rate will be the same rate that Stateline currently has. To see the details about these revised rates, go to [www.gsa.gov/perdiem](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem). **These changes apply to travel performed on or after February 1, 2006.**

**Is Your Travel Credit Card Account Active?** This serves as a reminder to contact the Office of Program Services **BEFORE** your travel begins to ensure that your travel credit card account is active. Bank of America routinely deactivates all accounts every 6 months when there is no activity.

### Help is within reach.

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

## 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, we increase the danger of slipping and falling. It is one of the special safety hazards of winter and inclement weather – but also 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 reduce 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.

You can reduce the risk of slipping outdoors in inclement weather if you:

- \* Slow down to give yourself time to react to a change in traction.
- \* Wear slip-resistant shoes or overshoes, and carry your work shoes.
- \* Wear sunglasses when outdoors in ice and snow to help you see possible hazards.

## NOLA Bids Farewell to Shropshire

*Kerry Petit and Glenda Lasseigne, New Orleans*

A packed conference room greeted retired field office manager (FOM) **John Shropshire** on January 11, 2006, at a reception to thank and honor a man who gave 31 years of service to GIPSA.

Joining **John's** office staff at the reception were members of the local grain trade, former FOMs **Dory Covington** and **Jim**

**Genius** along with their wives, former assistant FOM **Jimmy Wright, Orlando Phelps** from Southern University, APHIS State Plant Health Director **Bill Spitzer** and a good number of retired GIPSA employees who had worked with or under John over the years.

A 20-minute DVD loaded with pictures taken during **John's** career was played at the reception. Everyone enjoyed looking at some of the pictures from the past. **John** received many gifts including gift cards, a wine and cheese basket, T-shirts, caps and mugs, a photo album and a wonderful scrapbook filled with photos, cards, and letters. **John** and his wife **Perlae** enjoyed socializing with everyone, before leaving for their retirement home in Clinton, Louisiana.

**John** was praised for his leadership during the combination of the three field offices, his efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, his ability to see the benefits of technological changes over the years and foresight to implement those changes, and most important for always keeping the welfare of his employees first and foremost in his mind.

There were about 75 people in attendance, and everyone had a good time.

The New Orleans Field Office and GIPSA will surely miss **John Shropshire**.



*Retired field office manager*

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Reminder: remember proper footwear is important. Wear slip-resistant shoes appropriate for your job. Some have special sole patterns that are 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 Idea Hotline Update

*Norma Phelps, Washington, DC*

Here are the ideas received on the GIPSA Idea Hotline during December 2005 and January 2006. If you have questions about any ideas or the Hotline, please call me at 202-720-1017.

*Suggestor*

*Suggestion*

Philip Warren, Denver, CO

Make Computer Hardware Items Available for Purchase by Employees When Updated

Carol Carter, Denver, CO

Provide Safety Tapes Via AgLearn

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 202720-1015; 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.**

## Training Thoughts

*Rosemary Mayne, Washington, DC*

-  January 23 - February 10, 2006: OPM Organizational Assessment Survey
-  February 28, 2006: New Leader Program Application Closes

Looking to start 2006 with a good book on the effects of positive reinforcement? Check out How Full Is Your Bucket? (Tom Rath and Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D., Gallup Press, New York, 2004). This slim book, which is available in the Lending Library (the full library list is available in the inGipsa Training and Development Guide), is a New York Times #1 bestseller that discusses positive strategies for work and life.

## Issuances

*Terri Henry, Washington, D.C.*

### New Issuances

- FGIS Program Directive 9181.1, "Testing for Starlink™ Corn – Lateral Flow Test Strip Method" dated January 9, 2006

Please call **Terri Henry** at (202) 205-8281, Fax to (202) 690-2755, or e-mail to [Terri.L.Henry@usda.gov](mailto:Terri.L.Henry@usda.gov) if you have concerns or suggestions.

## Regulatory Info

*Tess Butler, Washington, DC*

### Federal Register Publications

- Notice of Request for New Information Collection – Published

*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 February 25, 2006 !**

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AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION  
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