



GIPSA News

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

July 2005

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Leslie King-Lewis, Washington, DC

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) consists of a variety of approaches to early intervention and dispute resolution. Many of these approaches include the use of a neutral individual, such as a mediator, who can help disputing parties resolve their disagreements. ADR seeks to resolve workplace conflict in order to have a more productive and happier workforce; provide a cost-effective method for resolving conflict and resolve workplace conflict at the lowest possible level; result in fewer grievances and EEO complaints, and provide a long-term resolution of underlying conflict.

Mediation is:

- **Fast.** Meetings are face-to-face and can be held quickly after a dispute arises.
- **Inexpensive.** Although the involvement of attorneys is permitted, it is not required in mediation.
- **Informal.** Mediation is relatively simple. No witnesses are called, nobody testifies under oath, and no complicated procedures or technicalities get in the way. Rather than the judge settling the dispute, the complainant and respondent cooperate to form a settlement.
- **Participatory.** Agreements crafted by the involved parties are often more satisfying than mandated decisions. Often, innovative solutions are reached through ADR.
- **Confidential.** Mediators do not share the content of mediation conversations. This feature fosters an open, safe environment that enhances discussion.
- **Relationship-building.** Mediation helps to improve communication between parties. Often, this makes solutions arrived at more long-lasting than those resulting from the formal process.

There are other options available, including conciliation, cooperative problem-solving, dispute panels, facilitation, fact-finding, interest-based problem solving and bargaining, settlement conferences, peer review, and alternative dispute.

An employee can request alternative dispute resolution when he/she feels that there is a situation where a neutral third party would be helpful or via referral by GIPSA’s EEO counselor in lieu of the traditional counseling activities during the pre-complaint processing stages of the EEO Complaint Process.

For more information, contact the GIPSA Civil Rights Staff at 202-720-0218.

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Names in the News

AWARDS

Rose Alexander and **Donna Melton**, program analysts, received extra effort awards for their outstanding efforts in providing support services during GIPSA's South Building Phase III Renovation Project.

Brian Burk, auditor, Denver, received a time off award for his extra effort and professionalism while serving as Acting Resident Agent Supervisor.

Sheila Davis, secretary, Washington, DC, received a time off award for her tireless efforts in setting up and maintaining a new filing system and effectively organizing the Office of Field Operations.

Sabri Gerguis, League City, was awarded a Certificate of Merit for exemplary performance on a trip to Yemen and Egypt which promoted the mission of the Agency in the region. Sabri has traveled overseas several times to represent GIPSA and has consistently fostered confidence in the services we provide.

Stephen Pollock, economist, Denver, received a time off award for his thorough and careful review of the P&SP 2003 Statistical Report.

CONDOLENCES

Kermit Hebert, former assistant field office manager, passed away on June 8. He began his career with the AMS Grain Division in New Orleans on July 21, 1953, as an ACG GS-5.

He retired on December 20, 1985, as the assistant field office manager of the Lutcher Field Office. Survivors include 4 children (3 sons and a daughter) and nine grandchildren. His wife passed away several years ago.

40-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Howard Suter, League City, TX

35-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Robert Carter, League City, TX

30-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

George Banks, New Orleans, LA
Eugene Bass, Jr., Washington, DC
Robert Campbell, League City, TX
Henry Greenwood, Washington, DC
Myron Hall, New Orleans, LA
Dennis Thalacker, Washington, DC
Richard Uehara, New Orleans, LA

25-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Nancy Morris, Atlanta, GA
Irene Omade, Washington, DC
John Sharpe, Washington, DC

20-YEAR SERVICE AWARD

Catherine Grasso, Washington, DC
Rosemary Mayne, Washington, DC
Patricia Smith, Wichita, KS

15-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Stuart Frank, Des Moines, IA
Beth Hayden, Washington, DC
Jamie Pitman, Kansas City, MO

10-YEAR SERVICE AWARDS

Clarence Abrom, League City, TX
Joycelyn Ballard, New Orleans, LA
John Contos, Jr., Toledo, OH
George Jenkins, Kansas City, MO

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

Issuances

Terri Henry, Washington, D.C.

New Issuances

- GIPSA Directive 3140.5, "Wireless Local Area Network (WLAN) Implementation," dated June 8, 2005 (Distribution: GIPSA)
- GIPSA Directive 4790.11, "GIPSA Safety and Occupational Health Training Program," dated June 8, 2005 (Distribution: GIPSA)
- FGIS Directive 9180.62, "Clothing and Identity Apparel Policy," dated June 13, 2005 (Distribution: B)
- FGIS Program Notice PN-05-06, "NIRT Barley Protein Program," dated June 20, 2005 (Distribution: A,C,E)

Cancellations

- FGIS Directive 9180.62, "Clothing and Identity Apparel Policy," dated January 7, 2002

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

Regulatory Info

Tess Butler, Washington, DC

Federal Register Publications

- Opportunity to Comment on the Applicants for the Wisconsin Area – Published June 1, 2005
- Designation for Georgia, Cedar Rapids (IA), Montana, and Lake Village (IN) Areas – Published June 1, 2005
- Opportunity for Designation in the Alabama, Essex (IL), Springfield (IL), and Washington Areas, and Request for Comments on the Official Agencies Serving These Areas – Published June 1, 2005
- United States Standards for Milled Rice; Correction – Published June 29, 2005

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

eTravel Update. Due to continuous problems with the bridge solution for Fed Travel provided by EDS, the Department has delayed all Agencies' implementation dates. The new implementation date for GIPSA is January 2006.

Address Change for Bank of America Payments. The Bank of America has changed its address for remittance for travel card accounts to:

Bank of America
PO Box 60075
City of Industry, CA 91716-0075

Update Your Profile. This is a reminder to ensure that your online FedTraveler profile is updated. You must have an accurate e-mail address. Also, each time your travel card is renewed, you must update your expiration date in your profile.

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

GIPSA Participates in Exercise “PINNACLE”

Jaime Adams, Washington, D.C.

On June 21-24, GIPSA employees participated in a Continuity of Operations (COOP) Crisis Action Team (CAT) exercise titled “PINNACLE”.

Participants included

Joey McNeil (GIPSA COOP CAT, primary), **Mack Manis** (GIPSA COOP, primary), **Jaime Adams** (GIPSA COOP CAT, secondary) and **Bruce Boor** (GIPSA COOP, secondary).

COOP CAT personnel, which include both USDA agencies and offices, provide support to the Office of the Secretary (OSEC) and COOP personnel provide support to USDA agencies and offices during emergency situations.

The purpose of exercise *PINNACLE* was to test the plans and procedures of USDA to relocate the COOP CAT, COOP Planning Division (CPD), and selected Headquarters (HQ) COOP personnel to the COOP Level 4 OSEC Emergency Relocation Facilities (ERF) in Elkins, West Virginia. From the OSEC ERF, USDA set up and operated the COOP Emergency Operations Center (CEOC). The exercise was designed to prepare USDA HQ to perform essential functions from its ERF and prepare USDA HQ for exercise *FORWARD CHALLENGE 06* planned for April 2006. During all exercise telephone conversations and e-mail, each message was required to begin with, “THIS IS AN EXERCISE PINNACLE MESSAGE.” This was very important in that during the 2004 exercise a local reporter

inadvertently called the CEOC. When the reporter heard the CEOC message, the reporter was instantly confused which alerted the CEOC that

multiple simulated “intel” messages. The exercise then simulated increases in the threat level until the level reached 4 which required COOP CAT to deploy to Elkins and arrive by 5:30 p.m. on June 21. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration **John Surina** was onsite in Elkins and played the role of the

THIS IS AN EXERCISE PINNACLE MESSAGE

WARNING

The following message contains numerous acronyms.

they had a “live” call. All live calls are handled in the utmost care by Office of Communications personnel onsite in order to avoid any unnecessary attention or misinformation associated with the exercise.

Agencies did not deploy during the active phase of the exercise and instead had operations simulated by a Response Cell in USDA HQ. In support of this Response Cell, each Agency contributed two personnel (GIPSA-Manis and Boor) to assist the Response Cell, simulating the operations of that particular Agency and responding to taskings.

The scenario for exercise *PINNACLE* included simulated emergencies or potential emergencies that affected the ability of all Federal Departments and/or Agencies to carry out their essential functions in their HQ buildings in the National Capital Region (NCR). The simulated emergencies included outbreak of avian influenza in the United States coupled with the detonation of a nuclear device in Washington, DC.

Building up to deployment to Elkins, COOP CAT personnel received

Secretary of Agriculture during the exercise.

Joey McNeil and I reported to Elkins, West Virginia, on June 21. We were both assigned a 12-hour midnight shift in the CEOC. Similarly, both **Mack** and **Bruce** worked alternating shifts in the Response Cell located in HQ. **Joey** worked with the Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) mission area and I provided support to the Farm and Foreign Agriculture Services (FFAS) mission area. GIPSA was the first to pioneer cross training to another mission area in COOP CAT operations, which will be strongly encouraged by CPD in next year’s exercise. Cross training was viewed as a key advancement in this exercise. Cross training will be essential to the operations of the OSEC CEOC during a real emergency where it is anticipated that not all COOP CAT personnel will be able to report to Elkins.

Overall, the exercise was deemed a success and COOP CAT and COOP personnel look forward to the challenges of *FORWARD CHALLENGE 06*.

GIPSA Bids Farewell to ERS' Ken Nelson

*Roger Schneider,
FareWashington, DC*

GIPSA, and especially Packers and Stockyards Programs, is losing a friend. As many of you already know, **Ken Nelson** of USDA's Economic Research Service is retiring after 38 years of government service. Although **Ken** was not a GIPSA employee, his work on issues and subjects of direct interest to the Agency exceeds the tenure (and maybe in some cases even life spans) of many at P&SP. One could obtain an excellent understanding of the evolution of the livestock and meat industry over time, and aspects of competition in the industry, just by reading publications that **Ken** authored or co-authored during his career, beginning with his time at the University of Illinois up through the present. For example, analyses of economies of size in production and meat packing, livestock cycles, meat price spreads, causes and effects of structural change, concentration, contracting, global markets, and price reporting are just a few of the topics that **Ken** has covered during his time at ERS.

Ken has been directly involved in P&SP activities on several occasions. As typical examples, **Ken** served on the Interagency Working Group that advised GIPSA on the major study of concentration that was completed in

1996, and similarly served on the Interagency Working Group for the current Livestock and Meat Marketing Study. We wish **Ken** well in his retirement, but will miss being able to call upon him to take advantage of his experience and insights. However, we understand that **Ken** plans to remain in the area, at least for the immediate future, so hopefully there will still be opportunity for contact!

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

Grilling Safety. Before you brush basting sauce on sizzling ribs or chicken, brush up on the basics of safe grilling. Cookouts present special food safety concerns – marinades, eating outdoors, basting foods. Keep summer meals easy, breezy and healthy with these helpful grilling tips.

- After marinating meat, poultry, or seafood, discard the marinade. This is easier to do if you marinate the food in a large resealable plastic food storage bag. Just toss out the bag.
- To use a marinade as a dipping or basting sauce, set aside a portion before adding raw food.
- Always wash hands thoroughly in hot, soapy water after handling raw meat, poultry or seafood.
- Let meat, poultry and seafood cook on the grill for at least 5 minutes after the last brush with a basting sauce. This prevents contamination since the basting brush was probably used on the food when it was raw.
- Discard any leftover basting sauce that has been in contact with raw meat, poultry or seafood.
- Test meat, poultry and seafood for proper doneness.
- Use clean plates to transfer cooked food from grill to table. Never place cooked food on the same unwashed plate that held raw food.
- Eat grilled foods while they are hot. Keep food covered until ready to serve.
- Use separate serving utensils for meat and salads.
- Discard food after 1 hour in the sun.

Courtesy: Kraftsfood.

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 July 25, 2005!

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
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