



# GIPSA News

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

*September 2000*

## From My Desk

*Jim R. Baker*

I recently had the pleasure of reading a great speech given by Major Jennifer Thorpe, USAF, on August 25, 2000, at the graduation of the Women's Executive Leadership Program's Class of 2000. I'd like to share part of Major Thorpe's speech with you—I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

Get out of the box and play the game! The Box is anything that stifles your creativity and slows your progress. The Game is the path you set to achieving your goals.

Here are three things that you can commit to doing today!

**FIRST.** Apply your skills and knowledge or they will grow weak and ineffective. As you would exercise a muscle, exercise what you have learned. Seek other opportunities to grow and develop technical, managerial, and leadership skills. Partner with employers for mutual benefit. Don't stop until you transform every challenge into opportunity...

growth... success.

Get out of the box and into the game!

**SECOND.** Focus on what matters most. Take an active role as a leader in all areas of your life. Show yourself as an example for others to follow. I have modified the serenity prayer to remind me of my active role in every situation... Grant me the Serenity to accept responsibility for the things in my control; the Courage to raise issues outside my control to the appropriate decision maker; and the Wisdom to analyze each situation to deem which action is appropriate.

Get out of the box and into the game!

**THIRD.** Feed the future. Share all that you've acquired. Take responsibility to mentor others. Cultivate your ability to communicate, lead and teach something that could change the lives of those around you.

Success requires determination, tenacity, integrity, enthusi-

asm, faith, discipline, and action. Don't be surprised when the blessings and opportunities start flowing because of all of your efforts and perseverance. Seize your opportunities and make good use of your time because procrastination is a thief! Don't take short cuts to excellence. Don't expect more than you give. People who want by the yard but give by the inch should be kicked by the foot!

This message is your kick-start to help you... wake up, get up, cheer up, think up, save up, step up, keep up, and most of all, don't give up!

Hold your head up! For you can only be what you will... and will to be. To be is to act, to act is to do, to do is to accomplish, and to accomplish is to win!

Welcome out of the box and into the game!

I hope that you will find a lot of value in Major Thorpe's words. I appreciate the work that all GIPSA employees do each and every day!

# Names in the News

## PERSONNEL

The Compliance Division's Review Branch thanks the following folks who assisted Branch team coordinators in conducting reviews of field offices and official agencies during the fourth and final quarter of fiscal year 2000: **Bob Krouse**, (former) protein coordinator, Kansas City Field Office, and **Denise Ruggles**, office support assistant, Cedar Rapids Field Office, helped evaluate the Wichita Field Office; **Roy Lyon**, ACG, Wichita Field Office, helped evaluate Amarillo Grain Inspection, Inc., located in the Wichita Field Office circuit; and **Jim Brown**, quality assurance specialist, New Orleans Field Office, helped evaluate the Toledo Field Office. **Bill Ashley**, deputy director, Executive Resources Staff, also helped us evaluate this office's financial operations.

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Denver welcomes **Teddi Baird**, agricultural economist. **Teddi** was born and raised on a ranch in south-western Colorado near Ignacio. She received her Bachelor of Science in Animal Science/Ag Business from Oklahoma Panhandle State University in 1995. After graduation she worked for FSIS as a federal inspector, then as a research assistant for SeaBoard Farms Live Production. She received her Master of Science in Agricultural Economics from Colorado State University in 2000.

Atlanta welcomes **Fouad Harraqi**, economist. **Fouad** has a doctorate in agricultural economics from the University of Minnesota and Master and Bachelor degrees also in agricultural economics from Hasan II International University in Morocco. He has been for the past 5 years in the faculty of Al Haykan University, which is an American-sponsored school in Morocco.

Des Moines welcomes **Tanisha Mapes**, administrative assistant, Des Moines. **Tanisha** is new to the Federal government. Prior to joining GIPSA, she was a receptionist/secretary in the private sector.

The Economic and Statistical Staff, Washington, DC, welcomes **Jay Mitchell**, grains economist. Prior to joining GIPSA, Jay spent 2 ½ years as the world wheat analyst with the Foreign Agricultural Service and 3 years as an economist at the Economic Research Service. Jay speaks Russian and Polish fluently, having lived in those 2 countries for a total of 5 years.

## RETIREMENTS

**Gary Bothwell**, President and Official Agency Manager, of the designated private agency Kansas Grain Inspection Service, Inc., retires after 42 years of service with the Kansas agency and former Kansas State Grain Inspection Department.

**Mike Lester**, Administrative Manager, of the delegated and designated State Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, retires after 30 years of service with the State.

**Buddy Taylor**, resident agent, Tallahassee, Florida, retired on September 2, 2000.

## AWARDS

**Michael Clem** received a 4-hour time off award for repairing 12 foot probes and an expensive leak in the TOFFA Lab. **Michael** has saved the agency money with his ability to keep the equipment repaired.

**Ray Hart** and **Doug Lacefield** earned time-off awards for providing ADP services and support to the two newly established Compliance Division satellite offices in Cedar Rapids and Kansas City.

**Terri Henry** and **Jeri Fisher**, Washington, DC, received time off awards for helping implement the Official Inspection and Weighing System's customer survey.

**Vicki Lacefield**, Standards and Procedures Branch, earned a spot award for serving as a team coordinator during the Review Branch's onsite compliance review of the Toledo Field Office.

## GIPSA to Host Poultry Meetings

Dear Jim:

After 30 years with the Department, I have decided to pursue new opportunities. Some might call it early retirement.

During the past 20 years, my association with FGIS has been an enjoyable experience. I am especially appreciative of the professional staff within FGIS at the field level, technical laboratory center, and the staff in Washington. Without excellent and committed people, nothing could have been accomplished. I am eternally grateful to the people with whom I have had the pleasure of working with and the friendships and partnerships we have developed. I know our employees in Superior and Milwaukee express the same appreciation.

To be a part of agriculture has been rewarding. I grew up in a farming community in southwestern Wisconsin and know the difficulties and joys associated with agriculture. Farmers and the agri-business community have always held a special place in my life. They are some of the most dedicated people I have ever worked with.

I wish everyone the best and am looking forward to our continued friendships.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Lester  
Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection  
State of Wisconsin

GIPSA will host a series of town hall meetings for poultry growers and interested stakeholders. The agenda for the meetings will include GIPSA's authority and responsibility relating to poultry, feed weight regulations, new rules announced by Secretary Glickman that relate to poultry, and poultry contracting terms. This outreach effort is designed to allow GIPSA to meet with poultry growers, the poultry industry and other stakeholders to discuss current issues in the poultry industry.

Meetings will be held at the following locations on the following dates:

Texarkana, TX	9/26/00
Salisbury, MD	10/3/00
Harrisonburg, VA	10/5/00
Archbold, OH	10/12/00
Athens, GA	10/20/00
Birmingham, AL	10/24/00
Jackson, MS	10/26/00
Russellville, AR	10/30/00
Dexter, MO	11/1/00
Fayetteville, NC	11/14/00

Additional information, including meeting times and places for each site, will be issued in individual announcements, and on GIPSA's web site at <http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/>.

## Guess Who....

photo A1

Do you know this baby-face?

If you think so, contact John Giler at telephone 202-720-0252 or via e-mail to [jgiler@gipsadc.usda.gov](mailto:jgiler@gipsadc.usda.gov).

We'll publish our mystery "man's" name and the name of the first person to correctly identify him in the next issue of *GIPSA News*!

# AAGIWA Summer Meeting

*Jan Hart, Washington, DC*

AAGIWA – what’s that? For those of you who don’t know, it’s the American Association of Grain Inspection and Weighing Agencies. AAGIWA is a professional organization that represents some of the State and private agencies that have been authorized by FGIS to provide official inspection and weighing services on our behalf.

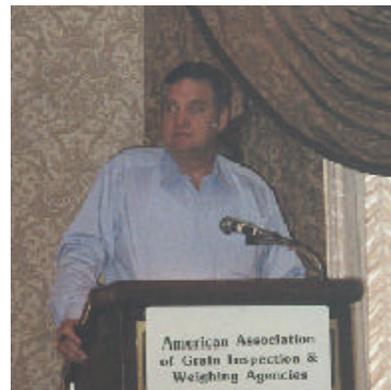
AAGIWA members traveled to New Orleans, LA, for their summer meeting this year. They had the opportunity for several unique experiences while visiting the “Big Easy”.



*Louisiana Department of Agriculture Commissioner Bob Odom shared the "Louisiana Agriculture Story".*

They started up the Mississippi River by touring Zen-Noh Grain Corporation’s export grain elevator in Convent, LA. Then they visited the FGIS New Orleans Field Office, in Destrehan, LA, where field office manager **John Shropshire** made a presentation about that office’s responsibilities. They also viewed the automated inspection laboratory at the FGIS lab at the ADM/Growmark’s export grain elevator in Destrehan.

Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry’s Commissioner **Bob Odom** talked to them about the “Louisiana Agriculture Story” at a breakfast meeting. AAGIWA President **Greg Hoelck** opened the general session, and turned it over to GIPSA. Administrator **Jim Baker** made introductory remarks, then Field Management Division Director **Dave Orr** and I gave a presentation and answered questions about FGIS items of interest to the agencies. The subjects included the FGIS reauthorization process, National Quality Database, the central laboratory evaluation, biotechnology and plans for the future, designation activities, status of pilot programs, and the re-



*GIPSA Administrator Jim Baker addresses AAGIWA members at the association's summer meeting in New Orleans, LA.*

view program. Technology vendors provided information about new products. The final presentation was by Zen-Noh President and CEO **Kevin Adams** about grain exports. AAGIWA members also held several internal business meetings.

While in New Orleans, AAGIWA members and their families had the chance to relax and unwind a little bit by participating in organized local activities, such as a plantation tour and riverboat ride. AAGIWA will next meet for their mid-Winter meeting, which is normally held in Las Vegas.

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## August Issuances

*Charlie Turner, Washington, DC*

- ❑ PN00-8, Calibrating NMR Instruments For Oleic-Type Sunflower Seed, dated, 9/4/00.
- ❑ PN00-9, Revision To Fees For FGIS Official Inspection And Weighing Services Performed By FGIS In The United States And Canada And For Supervision Of Official Inspection And Weighing Services Performed By Agencies, dated 8/15/00.
- ❑ PN00-10, Near-Infrared Transmittance (NIRT) Corn Oil and Protein Calibration Adjustments, dated 8/28/00.
- ❑ Dir 9230.1, Licensing Program, dated 9/4/00.
- ❑ Policy Bulletin, Ref#187, Authorization To Use Mechanical Sampler For Sampling, dated 8/22/00.

# Computer Viruses, Trojans, and Worms

*Carol Remmers, Washington, DC*

**Computer Virus.** To be defined as a virus, a program must: replicate itself in order to carry out a mission; be dependent on a “host” to carry out the mission; and create damage to the computer system “infected”. “A computer virus is an exact cybernetic analogy to its biological reference.”

Simply defined, a virus is a program that reproduces itself, hides in other computer code without permission, and does nasty or undesirable things, not intended by its victim.

The effects of a virus can be trivial, simply reproduces or displays messages; minor, alters or deletes infected files; moderate, wipes out entire disk drive; major, slowly corrupts data with pattern, making restoration difficult; severe, slowly corrupts data without pattern, making restoration impossible; or unlimited, virus which discovers system administrator’s password and mails it to one or more users, tempting them to use it for illegal purposes.

**Computer Trojans.** Computer Trojans are simply malicious computer programs disguised as something useful. The major difference between viruses and Trojans is that viruses reproduce, while a Trojan is just a one time program which executes its payload as soon as the Trojan is executed. Trojans are the most common way of bringing a virus into a system. A current example of a Trojan is a program called pkz300b.exe which disguises itself as an archiving utility, but when run it will delete your entire hard drive.

**Computer Worms.** Computer Worms are reproducing programs that run independently and travel across network connections. The main difference between viruses and worms is the method in which they reproduce and spread. A virus is dependant upon a host file or boot sector, and the transfer of files between machines to spread, while a worm can run completely independently and spread of its own will through network connections.

## **Virus, Worm and Trojan Prevention.**

- Never use a “foreign” disk or CD-ROM without scanning it for viruses.
- Always scan files downloaded from the internet.
- Be careful when opening ANY e-mail attachment.
- Never boot your PC from a floppy unless you are certain it is virus free.
- Write protect your disks to prevent viruses from reproducing onto your disks.
- Use licensed software from a reputable dealer.
- Password protect your PC to prevent copying of files in your absence.
- Make regular backup copies of all your work and system configurations.
- Install and use anti-virus software regularly.
- Update your anti-virus software regularly so it can detect new viruses.

# Plaus Selected as Excellence in Government Fellow

**Marianne Plaus**, Washington, DC, was selected as a 2000-2001 Excellence in Government Fellow. The one-year program, sponsored by the Council for Excellence in Government, is committed to improving the performance of government through the development of its leaders. This year-long experience promotes personal and professional growth and offers participants new ways to think and act as a leader. This in turn allows the Fellows to develop strategies for creating results in their own organizations and enhance their careers as committed public servants. Congratulations, **Marianne** !

## **Help.... where and when 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

# For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC

**Women and Depression.** Women suffer depression at twice the rate of men. Some experts point to biological differences such as lower levels of serotonin, a key brain chemical. Social and psychological factors such as child-rearing and higher poverty rates among women also may play a role. Women who see the glass as half empty or are prone to worry are more at risk for depression, as are women with low self-esteem or who feel they have little control over their lives.

Depression is a clinical disease that affects mood, body, and behavior. It's often suspected if someone feels depressed and/or loses interest in activities for longer than 2 weeks. Other symptoms also may be present: feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or hopelessness; sleeping too much or too little; appetite changes; and fatigue.

Women are more likely than men to suffer from seasonal depression, and to display anxiety, panic, eating disorders, and dependency when depressed than men are. See a doctor if you suspect you have depression. Do so right away if you feel suicidal.

A doctor may recommend therapy and/or medication. Self-care strategies also may help: exercise on a regular basis; keep in close touch with friends and family; consider what makes you unhappy and develop a realistic plan to change the situation. If you suffered from depression in the past, it is important to stay aware of your mood and behaviors. Even after successful treatment for an earlier episode, depression may return. If you suspect depression is coming back, seek help quickly. Talk to your

doctor about what worked for you the last time. Research suggests that you may be able to prevent a recurrence of depression by resuming antidepressant medications at the same dose that worked the first time. Monthly psychotherapy sessions also may help delay a repeat episode.

**The Lowdown on Trans Fats.** Studies show that trans fats increase bad cholesterol levels and lower good cholesterol. Experts believe these fats increase heart disease risk by as much as, if not more than, saturated fats.

Trans fats occur naturally in low levels in meat and dairy products. But most of the trans fats Americans eat come from fried fast foods, snack items, baked goods, and stick margarine. The common ingredient in these foods is hydrogenated vegetable oil. Hydrogenation is the process used to turn liquid oil into semi-solid shortening or margarine.

To lower your trans fat intake: pass up fried foods; avoid foods that list "partially hydrogenated vegetable oil" as one of the first few ingredients; replace butter and stick margarine with soft tub margarine; and use

olive or canola oil for cooking and baking

**Eating Out.** Don't leave healthy eating habits behind when you eat ethnic food. When ordering:

- Chinese, choose dishes that are steamed, jum (poached), kow (roasted), or shu (barbecued)
- Mexican, pick spicy chicken, black beans and rice, salsa, or soft corn tortillas
- Italian, select red sauces over white ones, and order your food grilled or lightly sauteed

**Calcium** may do more than build strong bones. It also could protect your heart. Older women who ate a low-fat diet rich in calcium cut their risk of heart disease by about one-third compared with those who did not. However, those who consumed high-fat milk products did not see this benefit.

**Staying Fit.** How hard is hard enough when it comes to exercise? Hard enough to **break a sweat** if you are talking stroke prevention. Men aged 40 to 84 who exercised vigorously at least once a week had a 21% lower **risk of stroke** over an 11-year period than less active men.

**Are EEO/CR issues or concerns affecting your employment with GIPSA? Do you have questions? Need help? 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 August. If you have questions about any ideas or the Hotline, please call me at 202-720-1017.

<i>Suggestor</i>	<i>Suggestion</i>
Patricia Tolle and Donna Wolf, Denver, CO Ahmad Gorabi, Des Moines, IA	Develop An Inactive Folder in Region's Records Directory Develop An Identification Symbol to Indicate E-Mail is From An Agency Employee
Tom Reagan, Beaumont, TX	Submitted Safety Slogans for Use By GIPSA
Charles Williams, New Orleans, LA	Improve Evacuation Procedures at Elevators When Employees Have to Cross Streets
Gregory Andrews and Ahmad Gorabi, Des Moines, IA	Use E-Mail to Send Large Documents from Field to Headquarters Offices

August's tee-shirt winner: **Patricia Tolle**, Denver, CO!

## **GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During August 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.

-  Submitted Safety Slogans for Use by GIPSA
-  Use E-Mail to Send Large Documents from Field to Headquarters Offices

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.**

# Official Designation Activities

GIPSA recently announced the following action on designations to officially inspect and weigh grain in specified areas in Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Utah.

\* GIPSA is asking for applicants to provide official services in the Champaign, Illinois; Davenport, Iowa; Keokuk, Iowa; Detroit, Michigan; Marshall, Michigan; and Enid, Oklahoma areas. GIPSA is asking for applications by October 1, 2000.

\* Ohio Valley Grain Inspection, Inc., is designated to inspect grain effective November 1, 2000 through September 30, 2003. Idaho Grain Inspection Service, Inc., Lewiston Grain Inspection Service, Inc., and Utah Department of Agriculture and Food are designated to inspect grain effective December 1, 2000, through September 30, 2003. Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce is designated to inspect and weigh grain effective January 1, 2001 through September 30, 2003. For official grain inspection and weighing services, contact Ohio Valley at 812-423-9010, Idaho at 208-233-8303, Lewiston at 208-746-0451, Utah at 801-392-2292, and Mississippi at 601-947-4095.

For further information contact Virginia Roseberry at 202-720-9803, or e-mail [vroseber@gipsadc.usda.gov](mailto:vroseber@gipsadc.usda.gov).

## BIG “Got it Going On!”

*Sharon Williams, African American Emphasis Program Manager*

The Blacks in Government (BIG) organization held its 22nd Annual National Training Conference in Washington, D.C., and celebrated its 25th (silver) anniversary this year, from August 21-25, 2000. It was all that it promised to be for the first conference in the new millennium.

Scores of Federal, state and local government employees from across the United States flooded halls and conference rooms in their business best with expectations of gaining information, networking, and having a wonderful experience. There were approximately 5,000 participants, a figure that seems to grow every year.

BIG conferences always provide excellent training opportunities, but they are also about African Americans and other races getting together, as one big happy family in love and unity. It is a time to experience and share the values of our unique cultures; a time to reap the benefits of our heritage; and a time to fortify the commitments we have to one another and America.

This year, our guest speaker, **Representative Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.**, kicked off the conference with a fiery, passionate speech about the legacy of the civil rights struggle, which brought the assembly to its feet. You might say that Jesse, Jr. is a chip off the old block. Then there was **Martin Luther King III** who spoke of the significance of the “**Redeem the Dream**” rally, August 26, 2000.

During the week, I attended a number of workshops, which I enjoyed. One workshop was conducted by **E. Ned Sloan**, a retired GIPSA employee, and currently an attorney practicing employment discrimination law. His workshop was entitled “Legal Issues to Overcome in Winning Federal Sector Discrimination Cases.” Also, in another workshop and unbeknownst to me until we introduced ourselves, I sat by a current GIPSA employee, **Dennis Murray**. Another high point of the conference was getting together with **John Shropshire**, Manager, New Orleans Field Office.

In addition to the workshops, there were agency forums, a national youth program, a health expo, a career fair, and special events.

In closing, BIG honored and presented its first annual Crystal Awards to four distinguished African Americans who have shown great leadership and accomplishment throughout the nation and the world. They included **David Satcher**, M.D., Ph.D., and Assistant Secretary for Health and Surgeon General; **Congressman John Lewis**, (D-Georgia) and acclaimed civil rights leader; **General Colin L. Powell**, retired U.S. Army, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Chairman, America’s Promise — The Alliance for Youth; and **Susan E. Rice**, Ph.D., Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, State Department. Their presence there was totally awesome.

Overall, the training was great, and the experience very impressive. Next year’s conference will be held in Los Angeles, CA. I encourage those employees who have never attended a BIG Conference to do so because I promise that you, too, will have an experience you will not forget.

## P&S 1998 Statistical Report Available

The Packers and Stockyards Statistical Report for 1998 is now available.

Published annually, this report on livestock marketing and meat packing contains data on industry concentration, packing plant size, volume of livestock fed by packers, packer financial performance, number of animals purchased by source of supply (public versus direct market), and method of procurement (live versus carcass basis). It includes data on slaughtering packers; market agencies buying or selling livestock on commission, including auction markets and selling agencies at terminal stockyards; and livestock dealers buying and selling livestock for their own accounts. It includes data from the 1998 reporting year and selected data for earlier years.

All slaughtering packers operating in commerce in the United States are subject to the annual reporting requirements of the Packers and Stockyards Act. Data contained in this report are derived from the annual reports submitted by all except small volume packers.

“This report,” said GIPSA administrator **Jim Baker**, “contains a wealth of data showing major structural changes in the livestock and meatpacking industries.”

The report is available in its entirety on GIPSA’s home page at: [www.usda.gov/gipsa/newsinfo/pubs/stat98/stat98.htm](http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/newsinfo/pubs/stat98/stat98.htm). Hard copies of the report may be requested from **Henry Wang**, GIPSA Economic and Statistical Support Staff, at 202-720-7455; FAX 202-690-1266; or email [henry.wang@usda.gov](mailto:henry.wang@usda.gov).

## Successful 2000 Savings Bond Drive

*Ed Durgin, Washington, DC*

During this year's U.S. Savings Bond drive, GIPSA's employee participation rate increased from 34% to 40%. A total of 53 new savers chose to purchase the more traditional Series EE or the newer "interest-indexed" Series I bonds.

As our agency's 2000 Bond Drive Coordinator, I would like to extend my appreciation to those whose efforts ensured that the drive was a success. This year's keyworkers for FGIS were: **Fred Kelley** (Baltimore), **Chuck Britton** (Sacramento), **Denise Ruggles** and **Phillip Miller** (Cedar Rapids), **Cindy Butz** (Grand Forks), **Diane Palecek** (Kansas City), **Lynn Cain** (League City and suboffices), **Susan Fall** (Minneapolis and Duluth), **Dave Grady** (Montreal), **Vicki Kottke** (Moscow), **James Holmes** (New Orleans and suboffices), **Richard Freudenthal** (Portland), **Mary Hill** (Stuttgart and suboffices), **Martha Carver** (Toledo), **Scott Cooley** (Olympia), **Ken Critchfield** (Wichita), **Wilmer Brandt** (TSD), and **Charlie Turner, Mary McCoy, Vicki Lacefield** and **Bob Fitzgerald** (Headquarters). Serving as P&S keyworkers were: **Anna Smith** (Atlanta), **Christopher Gray** (Denver), **Margaret Cummings** (Des Moines) and **Robert Kayne** (Headquarters).

Again, thanks to all who contributed to this year's successful Bond Drive.

## Railroad Track Scale Test Cars

*Paul Hadyka, Washington, DC*

As part of the official scale testing program, FGIS owns and operates five specially designed and built railroad track scale test cars for testing grain industry railroad track scales. The FGIS test cars are maintained and operated out of the FGIS Master Scale Depot, which is located at the Belt Line Railroad yard in Chicago, IL.



*Left: One of the five FGIS railroad track scale test cars.*

*Below: The test cart rolls out for track scale testing.*



This program is self-supporting through the user fees and an operating agreement with the Association of American Railroads (AAR). Under this agreement, FGIS tests all railroad and State-owned master scales annually and maintains traceability to the National Mass Standards at the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) in Gaithersburg, MD. In return, the AAR pays FGIS \$80,000 per year and provides movement of FGIS test cars to all railroad scale locations at no charge.

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## Travel Bits & Pieces

*Peggy Smith, Washington, DC*

Per Diem Rates. GSA has announced that the 2001 Domestic Per Diem Rates are going to fiscal year in lieu of calendar year, and will be published in the Federal Register on September 1, 2000, for travel effective on or after October 1, 2000. Please check [www.policyworks.gov](http://www.policyworks.gov) on or after September 1 and click on per diem rates to get these new rates. This website has lots of good travel information, so please check it frequently.

# Sudden Cardiac Arrest: It's as Serious as a Heart Attack

*Ruth Ortiz \**

Imagine that you and a few friends are getting ready for lunch. On the way to the restaurant, one of them goes into sudden cardiac arrest. What would you do? Are you trained to perform CPR? Do you know what to do to get the best help possible?

This is something that unfortunately can happen to anyone at any time. Cardiac arrest is one of the leading causes of death among adults. It strikes almost 1,000 times a day and claims up to 350,000 victims each year, making it a public health issue of National importance. Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) can strike any one, at any place, and at any time—often without warning. Unlike a heart attack, in which blood flow to the heart muscle is temporarily blocked, the primary cause of SCA is ventricular fibrillation, a life-threatening condition in which the heart's normal electrical signals become disorganized and erratic. This causes the heart to cease pumping blood effectively—the heartbeat of the victim changes from a normal beat to a quivering rhythm.

According to a recent study, the highest volume of SCA incidents occur on Mondays, closely followed by Fridays, the two most stressful days of the workweek. As a result, American companies are responding by equipping employee lay rescuers (essentially, collateral duty safety and health officers) with automated external defibrillators (AEDs). Defibrillators are small, portable, easy-to-use devices that deliver lifesaving defibrillation to victims of sudden car-

diac arrest. This device analyzes the heart's rhythm and, if necessary, tells the user to deliver a shock to the victim. The application of an electrical shock to the heart is the most effective way to restore the heart's regular rhythm - - more effective than CPR in saving the lives of victims of SCA. When administered within 4 minutes after a collapse, the defibrillator is most successful; but for every minute a victim is unconscious the probability of survival declines by approximately 2 to 10 percent. Nationwide, the average survival rate for SCA remains at 5 percent, and in cities with traffic congestion and slow elevators the survival rate is a mere 1 percent. Studies show that few patients survive if the time from collapse to defibrillator is greater than a few minutes.

The American Red Cross and the American Heart Association have developed a "Chain of Survival" that list four crucial steps that you should follow if someone you know or work with should become a victim of SCA.

**\*Step 1:** Get emergency medical care (for example, calling 911 or other designated emergency telephone number);

**\*Step 2:** Administer CPR;

**\*Step 3:** Administer defibrillation as soon as possible; and

**\*Step 4:** Get the person to a medical institution that has advanced cardiac life support.

Because time and medical care are critical when dealing with an SCA victim, a break in any of the four links

in the chain can diminish the chance of survival. Administering defibrillation within the first critical minutes is considered the most important link in the chain and a central component of emergency medical service systems for preventing death from sudden cardiac arrest.

*\* Ruth Ortiz was a 2000 Summer Intern with the FGIS Safety and Health Staff. Ruth was born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She later moved to Buffalo, New York. Ruth is entering her third year at Kentucky State University, where she is studying early elementary education with an emphasis in Spanish.*

**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

**by September 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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