



GIPSA News

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

December 2000

From My Desk

James R. Baker

GIPSA recently assumed the lead role in providing liaison services between USDA and the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC), an organization representing 32 Native American colleges and universities throughout the United States. A 1998 memorandum of understanding between USDA and AIHEC calls for a USDA/AIHEC liaison program to promote better mutual understanding and access to services between the two organizations. John Phillips, formerly the director of Cooperative Extension Service for Si Tanka College in South Dakota, has been assigned to GIPSA to implement the intra-departmental liaison program.

Native American colleges and universities, known as Tribal Colleges, are in some of the most remote and impoverished areas of our country. Just some 30 years old, Tribal Colleges developed as a grassroots movement aimed at self-determined community development and cultural preservation. These colleges and universities provide education, research, and extension services that balance their earth-based knowledge

systems and culture with today's modern sciences and technologies. Legislation in 1994 gave 30 of these colleges land-grant status so they are often referred to as "1994 Institutions."

GIPSA's leadership role in the USDA/AIHEC liaison program will continue to develop during the coming months. Initially, a resource working group representing a cross-section of GIPSA management and staff will help implement the liaison program. Liaison services might include recruitment for employment and internship opportunities, outreach, and agency-wide coordination with USDA departments offering programs and services for Native American constituents. Future plans call for a regionally-based network of USDA/AIHEC liaisons, similar to the liaison programs already in place serving the Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

John Phillips will serve as the program's first liaison and will help develop policies and procedures for the program while providing basic outreach to the Native American community. He brings to GIPSA

several years of field experience working on Native American reservations with Tribal Colleges and USDA. For further information, he can be reached at 202-720-5877, John_L.Phillips@usda.gov.

Improved GIPSA Web Site



A new and improved version of GIPSA's external web site is on-line at www.usda.gov/gipsa. The new site features improved navigation, and more customer-oriented pages.

As always, your comments, suggestions for improvement, content, etc., are welcome and appreciated. Just send them to gipsa-webmaster@gipsadc.usda.gov.

Names in the News

PERSONNEL

GIPSA welcomes **James Elswick** and **Karen Morman**, legal instruments examiners, **Nathan Gardner**, industrial specialist, and **Richard Porter**, auditor, Denver; and **Jerry Douglas** and **Susan Kleinman**, auditors, Atlanta.

The Compliance Division's Review Branch thanks the following field-based people who assisted Branch team coordinators in conducting reviews of several FGIS field offices and official agencies during the first quarter of fiscal year 2001. Quality assurance specialists (QAS) **Scott Cooley**, Washington Federal/State Office; **Susan Fall**, Minneapolis Field Office, and **Phil Meachem**,

Stuttgart Field Office; helped evaluate the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, located in the Minneapolis Field Office circuit. **Bill Ashley**, deputy director, Executive Resources Staff, helped evaluate this State's finances. **Jackie Stevens**, agricultural commodity grader (ACG), Stuttgart, helped evaluate J. W. Barton Grain Inspection Service, Inc., and Cairo Grain Inspection Agency, Inc., located in the Stuttgart Field Office circuit. **Don Akers**, QAS, Corpus Christi; **Jimmy Cadle**, ACG, Jonesboro; and **Mark Wooden**, ACG, Kansas City, helped evaluate three official agencies in the Cedar Rapids Field Office circuit – Central Iowa Grain Inspection Service, Inc, Mid-Iowa Grain Inspection, Inc., and D. R. Schaal Agency. **Janet Walton**, shift supervisor, New Orleans, and **Erin Dubroc**, program support clerk, New Orleans, helped evaluate the Baltimore Field Office. **Bill Ashley** helped evaluate this field office's financial operations. **Fred Kelley**, shift supervisor, Baltimore Field Office, helped evaluate the Georgia Department of Agriculture, located in the Baltimore Field Office circuit. **Bill Ashley** also helped evaluate this State's finances. As this was a first compliance review for **Phil**, **Jackie**, and **Mark**, each completed a detail to Washington, DC, after the onsite portion of the review. Many thanks to these folks for helping us conduct the review program so successfully!

Hal Crocker, senior marketing specialist, has been selected to fill the resident agent position in Russellville, AR. He plans to report as the resident agent March 1, 2001, after he

completes his 60-day development assignment for the Executive Leadership Program. **Hal** has 14 years experience as a marketing specialist, packer and poultry specialist, and senior marketing specialist with P&S Programs.

AWARDS

Don Akers, QAS, Corpus Christi Suboffice, earned a spot award for serving as a team leader during the Cedar Rapids official agency compliance review.

Jimmy Cadle, ACG, Jonesboro Suboffice, earned a spot award for accepting an assignment to serve on a compliance review with limited notice, and canceling his planned leave to accept the assignment.

Scott Cooley, QAS, Washington Federal/State Office, earned a spot award for conducting the first part of the Wisconsin compliance review by himself, and working without a team member to assist him.

Owen Ecker, Washington DC; and **Fred Kelley** and **Richard Tomarelli**, Baltimore; received time-off awards for assisting with the 2000 customer survey. Their contributions helped make the survey a success.

James Hood, marketing specialist, Atlanta, received a time off award for his diligence and extra effort in conducting an investigation which found defective chick counters in hatcheries and resulted in \$12,074.12 returned to the poultry growers.

Continued, see Names on page 3.

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Keith Ingram, auditor, Des Moines, received a quality step increase for sustained superior performance and leadership in initiating and conducting financial investigations and directing the Financial Unit of the Des Moines office.

LaDondra Moon, office clerk, Des Moines, received a quality step increase for sustained superior performance and willingness to work levels above her responsibility in direct support to the Des Moines office.

Jackie Mougin, student trainee auditor, Des Moines, received a quality step increase for her sustained dedication, commitment, and superior performance of assigned duties, thereby contributing to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Des Moines office.

Terry Ryno, resident agent, Springfield, Missouri, received a quality step increase for demonstrated dedication, enthusiasm, and willingness to put out the extra effort to get the job done and for resourcefulness in handling complaints and investigations and sharing his experience with others.

CONDOLENCES

Don Burris, president and official agency manager, Amarillo Grain Exchange, Inc., passed away November 10, 2000. Don had been ill for a number of years.

Harold Reese passed away on November 26. Harold managed the Bunge elevator in Destrehan, LA. He served on GIPSA's Grain Inspection Advisory Committee from 1995-98, a year as Chairperson.

IDPs - Action Plans for Your Career

Dave Orr, Washington, DC, and Graig Watts, New Orleans

A good action plan is basic to success. An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is the written action plan for your career. It is the roadmap to an identified career destination. The main components include describing your future career goals and mapping the training and experience needed.

A goal for an IDP should be pertinent to your work and your career. It should be something that you see as worthwhile to pursue—either improvement or mastery of a knowledge, skill, or ability (KSA) that would help you in your current job, in a new responsibility in your current job, or in another position. It should be realistic, challenging, and reachable. Once you identify your goal, you make the plan to obtain the KSAs through specific learning experiences (formal training, developmental work, details, projects, books, conferences, etc.). Your local training officer is available to assist you in this effort.

FGIS requires that you be given the opportunity to develop your IDP. Each May, the IDP form is distributed to Agency supervisors with instructions to facilitate the development or refinement of your plan. You and your supervisor should come to a meeting with rough ideas about your IDP. Your supervisor can help provide information on the Agency's long- and short-range plans, staffing needs, skill needs, funds availability, workload, and relevance. Recognize that there are regulations and union agreements that govern training. Discuss every aspect of your plan. Be prepared to provide alternatives.

An IDP is a flexible plan made up of activity requests. It is neither a contract nor a formal training request. Unexpected situations can interfere with training plans, and events can arise that require unforeseen training. Modifications can be made.

You have the responsibility to take your plan and make a formal request using an SF-182 for specific training. Know the name of the course, the vendor, the location, the dates, and the costs. Once this information is transferred to an SF-182 form (Request for Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training), your immediate supervisor must approve it. Then your second-line supervisor must sign it, unless they are the same person. The SF-182 also requires approval by the Agency Training Officer and your Manager. When all these steps are completed, registration for the course can take place.

Your Collateral Duty Training Officer or office staff can assist you with the SF-182 process.

November Issuances

Charlie Turner, Washington, DC

- Directive 9181.1, "Testing for StarLink TM Corn", dated 11/15/00

FGIS Reauthorization

Neil Porter, Washington, DC

On November 9, 2000, President Clinton signed a bill extending our authority to implement several provisions of the United States Grain Standards Act (USGSA) from September 30, 2000 to September 30, 2005. These provisions include our authority to collect the tonnage portion of the original inspection and weighing fees, and the fee for supervising official agencies. Also, the bill reduces the ceiling on our overhead costs from 40% to 30%, extends our authority to receive appropriations, and extends our authority to maintain an Advisory Committee.

In addition to extending these authorities, the bill also revises the USGSA in other program areas, as follows:

- Provides more flexibility to obtain samples of export grain. The revised statute eliminates the requirement that samples be taken after final elevation.
- Provides more flexibility to test official equipment. The revised statute eliminates the requirement to test all official equipment at least annually.
- Expands the authority to prohibit disguising grain quality. This prohibition will now apply to all grain, not just the grain that is officially inspected.
- Expands contracting authority to include inspection and weighing functions.
- Incorporates the existing pilot programs for designated agencies as permanent exceptions, and provides for additional pilot programs.

Although the reauthorization process was lengthy, it was not due to lack of support from our customers. From the opening testimony provided in February, our customers have been supportive of our role in grain marketing, and complimentary of the job we have been doing.

The entire text of this bill can be viewed via a link from our home page: www.usda.gov/gipsa.

Thank You

Vicki Kottke, Moscow

A heart felt THANK YOU to everyone who has offered me encouragement and well wishes during the past year as I have fought cancer.

Special thanks to my coworkers in the Moscow Field Office, who have been forced to put up with an often slow and tired (and hopefully not too grouchy) office support assistant.

I finished my last chemotherapy session the Tuesday before Thanksgiving and the doctor is optimistic that my recovery will be complete.

The Federal Grain Inspection Service is full of wonderful, caring people and I wish all of them a joyous and healthy new millennium.

Fried Turkey Day

*Vicki Lacefield,
Washington, DC*

Washington, DC, headquarters had it's second year of fried turkeys!

Last year, **Doug Lacefield** fried turkeys for the grain folks, as a sort of a trial run to see if people enjoyed them or not. Well, it went over so well, that this year **Doug** and **Bob Lijewski** fried four turkeys and invited all GIPSA headquarters staff to lunch.



Administrator Jim Baker (left) and Paul Hadyka (right) were at the head of the Fried Turkey Day lunch line!

Everyone who attended either gave a donation or brought a dish to share. The turkeys and all of the food were delicious, and we had a great time!

Doug and **Bob** did such a great job that we're hoping to convince them that we should have an annual "Fried Turkey Day".

Designation Renewal Ceremonies

Jan Hart, Washington, DC

Two official agencies, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (Minnesota), and Ohio Valley Grain Inspection Service, Inc. (Ohio Valley), recently had their designations renewed to provide official grain inspection and weighing services under the U.S. Grain Standards Act (USGSA). Administrator **Jim Baker**, FGIS field office representatives, and I participated in ceremonies to acknowledge their accomplishments.

Jim and **I** visited Minnesota at their main specified service point (SSP), i.e., grain inspection laboratory, in Minneapolis. Minneapolis Field Office manager **Steve Bennett** and assistant manager **Ted Respet** also attended. Commissioner **Gene Hugoson**, director and official agency manager **Dale Heimermann**, assistant director **Judy Wickham**, and southern area program supervisor **Chuck Dryke** represented Minnesota. Northern area program supervisor **John Tanski** was not able to attend. Employees and several applicants for services also attended the ceremony.

Commissioner Hugoson has a lifelong farming background. He was elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 1986, where he served five terms before his initial appointment to the commissioner's position in 1995. He also serves on the board of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. **Dale** served 25 years with the State Department of Economic Security, prior to being chosen for a managerial

position with Minnesota in 1990. He continues to serve in that capacity today.

The "Grain Inspection Law" was passed in Minnesota in March 1885, and they began operation to provide services in August of that year. The law provided for fees, standards, and appeals. Minnesota was first delegated to provide mandatory export and inspection and weighing services, and designated to provide permissive inspection and weighing services under the amended USGSA in 1978.



Minnesota Designation Ceremony (L to R): Dale Heimermann, Gene Hugoson, Jim Baker, Steve Bennett, and Ted Respet.

Minnesota provides services throughout the State of Minnesota. They provide export services at 3 full-time SSP's in Duluth, domestic inspection services at 7 full time and 11 intermittent SSP's, and domestic weighing services at 31 approved weighing locations. Their full-time SSP's are located in Breckinridge, Granite Falls, Mankato, Minneapolis, Morris, Savage, and Windom. Minnesota inspected 93 ships for export in fiscal year 2000. They performed 89,950 full-grade inspections last year, placing them as the highest volume State agency in the country. They inspected 1,130 sublots, 4,700 barges,

58,570 railcars, 6,361 trucks, 14,647 submitted samples, 2,270 reinspections, 16 locals, and 2,256 other inspections. Minnesota also provided 8,741 official-commercial inspections, 22,605 wheat protein inspections, 1,171 soybean protein and/or oil inspections, 990 aflatoxin tests, and 3,732 DON tests last year. In addition, Minnesota provided a total of 30,325 weighing services.

We visited Ohio Valley at their main SSP in Evansville, IN. Stuttgart Field Office manager **Clyde Steves**, and assistant manager **Jackie Clements**, and Jonesboro Suboffice officer-in-charge **Bill Strickland**, were also present. President and official agency manager **Linda Meny**, assistant manager **Mark Elpers**, and other employees represented Ohio Valley.

Ms. Meny began her career as a licensed sampler with the agency in 1979, then earning her technician's and inspector's licenses. She became partners with the owner in 1995, and sole owner last year.

As background, **Jacob Taylor** originally founded the agency in 1916. His son-in-law, **Chester Goodge**, took over agency operations in 1926. In 1969, when **Chester** passed away, his son, **James Goodge, Sr.**, took over. The agency initially operated as two agencies, Evansville Grain Inspection and Henderson Grain Inspection, which merged into Evansville. Evansville was first designated

*Continued, see Designations
on page 6.*

Designations, from page 5.

Under the USGSA for domestic inspection services in 1978. The name of the agency was later changed to Ohio Valley Grain Inspection and it was subsequently incorporated. As mentioned above, ownership of the agency is now in **Linda's** very capable hands.



Ohio Valley Designation (L to R): Mark Elpers, Linda Meny, Jim Baker, Jan Hart, Clyde Steves, Jacky Clements, and Bill Strickland.

Ohio Valley provides services throughout portions of the States of Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee. They recently moved their operations from Newburgh to Evansville, IN, to be closer to and provide better service to their applicants. They provide inspections from this main SSP in Evansville, and another full-time SSP in Hopkinsville, KY. They performed 9,864 full-grade inspections in fiscal year 2000: 1,042 barges, 5,545 rail-cars, 3,093 submitted samples, and 184 reinspections. They also provided 4,606 official-commercial inspections. They also provided testing for aflatoxin, DON, and stress-cracked corn.

Jim Baker also visited the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (Mississippi), to participate in a ceremony to renew their designation. The ceremony took place at the State Headquarters in Jackson. New Orleans Field Office assistant manager **Kerry Petit**, was also present. Commissioner **Lester Spell**, deputy commissioner **Chris Sparkman**, and **Keith Pouncey**, grain division director, represented Mississippi.

Dr. Spell is a sixth-generation Mississippian whose family has farmed since the early 1800s. He graduated with his Doctorate of

Veterinary Medicine, served 2 years in the Army, and then began his veterinary practice. He was elected Mayor of his hometown in 1975. He held this position until he took office as Commissioner of Agriculture in 1996, and is now serving his second term. He serves on boards of numerous agricultural and economic development organizations.

Mississippi organized the Grain Inspection Division in 1961 to help a

budding grain industry. Farmers had begun increasing their grain acreage to help subsidize their cotton production. In 1961, they provided their first grain services at the Jackson County Terminal Elevator in Pascagoula. Mississippi was first delegated and designated to provide official inspection and weighing services under the amended USGSA in 1978.

Mississippi provides domestic inspection services at three full time SSP's, grain inspection laboratories, and domestic weighing services at three approved weighing locations. Their full-time SSP's are located in Lucedale, Stoneville, and Vicksburg. Mississippi performed 1,461 full-grade

inspections in fiscal year 2000, inspecting 682 barges, 21 rail-cars, 752 submitted samples, and 6 reinspections. They also provided 23 weights, and 31 aflatoxin testing services last year.

It was certainly a pleasure for both **Mr. Baker** and me to take part in these designation ceremonies.



Mississippi Designation (L to R): Jim Baker, Lester Spellman, Deputy Commissioner Chris Sparkman, and Kerry Petit.

Travel Bits & Pieces

Peggy Smith, Washington, DC

Frequently Asked Questions Concerning Telephone Calls When on Official Travel

1. Under what authority are telephone calls reimbursable? The Federal Travel Regulations, Part 301-12 allows for the reimbursement of official telephone calls while in a travel status as a miscellaneous travel expense.

2. What is considered an official telephone call? Any call that is determined to be of an official nature by your agency.

3. Are telephone calls to inform family members of my safe arrival, change of itinerary, or a daily check-in reimbursable and what is the dollar limit on personal calls? Long distance personal telephone calls are authorized as being in the interest of the Government when an employee, traveling for more than 1 night, i.e., 2 or more nights, on Government business, makes a brief call to his or her residence, or to locations within the local duty station's immediate commuting area (the area from which an employee regularly commutes) to speak to members of the immediate family (spouse, minor children, or anyone sharing the same residence). For those who do not have immediate family at the official duty station, a maximum of one telephone call per week is permitted to a nonfamily member within the employee's local duty station's immediate commuting area. The aggregate dollar amount is not to exceed \$5 per lodging night for the duration of the travel period, or the actual amount spent for the duration of the travel period, whichever is less, when the travel is for more than 1 night's lodging. There is no specific daily allowance, however, the total amount that may be claimed is \$5 times the number of lodging nights. If you have a government calling card, you are limited to a 15-minute call per day when traveling for more than 1 night. You should not claim telephone calls made with a government calling card on your travel voucher.

4. How many official telephone calls may be made in any one day and is there a dollar limit? You may make as many official calls as necessary to accomplish your mission and there is no dollar limit for such calls.

Review Team Snapshots!



Cedar Rapids Official Agencies (L to R): Mark Wooden, Kansas City; Joe McNeil, Washington, DC; Jimmy Cadle, Jonesboro; and Don Akers, Corpus Christi.

State of Wisconsin (L to R): Scott Cooley, Olympia; Virginia Roseberry, Washington, DC; and Phil Meachem, Stuttgart.

(Susan Fall, Minneapolis, is not pictured as she had postponed joining the team to work on a grading concern in her circuit.



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

Dave Funk Honored by U. of Illinois

Evelyn Payne, Technical Center

The University of Illinois' College of Agriculture, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences (ACES) Alumni Association honored the descendents of Frank and Fern Funk, including their son **Dave Funk**, chief, Inspection Systems Engineering Branch, Technical Services Division. The family received the 2000 Family Spirit Award on October 13 at the ACES Family Reunion in Urbana, IL. The award recognizes the family "in celebration of their loyalty to and support of the Colleges of ACES and the University of Illinois."

The Funk family's Illini legacy began in 1912 when Frank enrolled in general agriculture at the University of Illinois. His son, Loraine, attended and graduated from the university with a degree in chemistry in 1944. Five of Loraine and Eunice Funk's six children, Jim, **Dave**, Ted, Bob, and Mary; and four of the children's spouses graduated from the U. of I.

The U. of I. Tradition has continued into the fourth generation, with **Dave** and **Linda Funk**'s son **Ryan** receiving his degree in agricultural engineering in 1997, and all three of **Dave**'s brother Ted's children presently attend the University. In all 16 members of the Funk family have attended the U. of I., earning 15 degrees, including 8 from ACES.

According to the university, "It is exciting to know that the tradition continues with three Funk family members currently students on campus, one of whom is studying in the Colleges of ACES."

Recruitment Trip to Puerto Rico

Krimy Almodóvar, Atlanta

During the first week of October, **Amy Van Skiver** and **I** went to Puerto Rico on a special assignment requested by Administrator **Jim Baker**. The intention of this trip was to make contacts for future recruitment. With this in mind, we visited three different universities and the Secretary of Agriculture of Puerto Rico. At the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus, we visited with professor **Grisell Meléndez**, Coordinator Coop Program, College of Business Administration and professor **Leticia Fernández**, Coordinator Coop Program, Accounting Department. At the Interamerican University, San Germán Campus, we visited with **Auria Matos**, Director College of Business Administration and several other professors. We also visited with **Dr. Gladys González**, professor and Cooperative Education Program Coordinator, at the College of Agriculture Sciences at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez Campus. We informed them about the agency, what positions are available, and the skills for which GIPSA is looking.

Our visit with the Secretary of Agriculture, **Dr. Miguel Muñoz**, was productive because he didn't have any knowledge about our agency, the P&S Act and regulations, and our jurisdiction in Puerto Rico. He was very interested in the Act. **Dr. Muñoz** gave us a general overview about the agriculture sector of Puerto Rico, especially the poultry and livestock industries. He said Puerto Rico has a little more than 200 poultry growers. These chicken growers are independent growers for Picú, To-Ricos, and a newly formed company called Papri.

Nilsa Ramos, senior marketing specialist, Atlanta, visited these companies at the beginning of this year while she was in a special assignment in the WEL Program. She gave them copies of the Act and regulations and got copies of their contracts for our records. In the livestock side, **Dr. Muñoz** said they do not sell in auction markets, and they do not weigh the animal to determine a pay weight. The livestock sellers estimate weight by eye. **Dr. Muñoz** was glad we may be able to assist him in regulating these industries.

As part of the assignment we participated in a job fair at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez Campus. We had the opportunity to meet with students who are interested in getting jobs with USDA, and apply their knowledge with us.

We really appreciate **Jimmy Garrahan**'s company. **Jimmy** was a HACU intern with GIPSA who lives in Puerto Rico. He also participated in our meetings, and at the job fair, sharing his experience with GIPSA.

Career Change?

Rosemary Mayne,
Washington, DC

Joanne L. Smikle, trainer and consultant, discussed “Shifting Your Career into High Gear,” at a recent training meeting. Her dynamic presentation offered points on assessing and accelerating your career.

To jump start your career, she said, you need to engage your head, heart, and hands. “Head” is the cognitive knowledge you need in the area in which you want to work. Such knowledge is gained through listening, talking, and learning. “Heart” is the passion and commitment to achieve your goal. “Hands” is the action—doing and then celebrating the small and large successes along the way.

Self-assessment is key and Ms. Smikle offered tips to help. It is vital to look at those with whom you associate: do you share compatible goals, have similar direction, and provide positive influence? Figure out what is right; be solution-focused, NOT problem focused. Continually pointing out what is wrong does not change anything. Give up the familiar and comfortable, and focus your energy on a change, she stated.

Ms. Smikle said it takes maturity to become the change you want to create—not talking change but living it. This requires 3 Cs. First is credibility or believability, which begins with your “packaging.” How you look is important, she said, and you should ask, “Do I maintain a professional image?” Next is candor: share honest information with conviction and belief. Last is commitment to self, to professional development and goals,



GIPSA Idea Hotline Update

Norma Phelps, Washington, DC



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

<i>Suggestor</i>	<i>Suggestion</i>
Ahmad Gorabi, Des Moines, IA	Solicit Input From Teams When Preparing Performance Appraisals
Deborah Edwards, League City, TX	Enter Name of the Location Service Point in Lieu of the Number for EGIS Reports

November’s tee-shirt winner: **Deborah Edwards!**

GIPSA Hotline Ideas Accepted and Approved for Implementation During November 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.

- ☛ Change Terminology for Mechanical Samplers Accessibility

Keep those ideas coming in! Send your ideas to the GIPSA Idea Hotline via e-mail: 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.**

and to the cause. This requires life-long learning.

The presentation ended with an inspirational example from Maya Angelou’s book, Wouldn’t Take Nothing for My Journey Now, to illustrate a person who became the change she wanted to create. The woman de-

cidied where she wanted to be, made a plan, and made it happen.

Consider Ms. Smikle’s message. If you wish for a change in your career, do some self-assessment, and guided by core values, continually learn, take some risks, and be the change you desire.

Sharing Hearts... Builds Community

*Joanne Nielsen,
Technical Center*

On a Saturday in June 2000 the *Day of Caring Program* in Kansas City drew more than 4,000 people donating time and energy in Heart of America United Way event.

At the American Red Cross were a group of 10 Technical Services Division (TSD) employees: **Dave Funk, Luccile Clarke, Ganga Murthy, son Vinny Murthy, Mary Long, James Rampton, Dempsey Louis, Louis Bussjaeger, and I.** We staffed the paint rollers and brushes to spruce up the interior of the office.

The Day of Caring Program this year drew volunteers from 117 companies and 44 federal agencies, and completed 280 projects for non-profit organizations, funneling time and labor into the Kansas City Community.

But that is not all TSD was going to do for community. During the 2000 Heartland CFC Campaign, TSD employees planned activities and collected funds donated to the *Spina Bifida Association of America*. We reached 125% of this year's CFC goal.

TSD has been accepted into the Heartland CFC *Circle of Caring*, recognizing all TSD employees for profound involvement in community activities. We are small but mighty with 68 full-time employees. I would like to thank all TSD employees for their support during Heart of America United Way/Heartland Combined Federal Campaign activities.

Security Web Sites of Interest

Carol Remmers, Washington, DC

Norton Virus Encyclopedia: This is a good site for learning more about Viruses and the damage they can do. You can also verify virus hoaxes.

- <http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/vinfodb.html>

McAfee Virus Information: Excellent site, more detailed information than Norton's site. This site contains information on viruses and virus hoax's.

- <http://vil.nai.com/villib/alpha.asp>

Urban Legends and Folklore: This is a good place to verify the urban legends making their way through e-mail.

- <http://urbanlegends.about.com/science/urbanlegends>

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST): This site contains information about a variety of computer security issues, products, and research of concern to Federal agencies, industry, and users. This site is operated and maintained by NIST's Computer Security Division as a service to the computer security and IT community.

- <http://csrc.nist.gov/>

Computer Security Information: This page features general information about computer security. Information is organized by source and each section is organized by topic. See the Table of Contents for a more detailed look at the organization of this site.

- <http://www.alw.nih.gov/Security/security.html>

Government Computer News: Good site to review security headlines in the Federal government.

- <http://www.gcn.com/>

Federal Computer Week Security Microsite: Good site to review security headlines in the Federal government. Plus a page full of links to other security sites.

- <http://www.fcw.com/microsites/security.asp>

Security HQ (MyCIO.com): Security HQ has "top ten" lists for latest security threats and viruses.

- <http://hq.mycio.com/>

Security Portal: Similar to MyCIO.com with more technical details on latest security issues.

- <http://www.securityportal.com/>

For Your Health

Mavis Rogers, Washington, DC.

Sleepless in America. A lack of sleep can make you careless. Now research shows it also can make you sick. More than 100 million Americans of all ages fail to get good nights' sleep each year. And, we are suffering for it: from heart disease to depression to "accelerated aging", the latest condition tied to sleeplessness. Yet, bypassing bedtime is considered a virtue in America, where some crow about needing only 5 or fewer hours of sleep.

The average adult gets 6 hours and 58 minutes of zzzs nightly — we need more. Only 35 percent reach the desired goal of eight hours. Even the sleep we are getting isn't great: two-thirds of us complain about waking up unrefreshed, struggling to fall asleep, rousing repeatedly during the night, or rising early and being unable to return to sleep, according to a National Sleep Foundation poll.

At least 42 percent of Americans are so sleep-deprived that it harms their work and relationships. Maybe that's why Einstein said he needed 10 hours of shut-eye merely to function and another 2 to do physics.

You may seem completely out of it as you snooze, but your body works overtime. Through the night, your brain is refurbishing your worn organs, burning calories, releasing hormones (including growth hormones which build muscle), and processing and storing the day's memories and lessons. If you interrupt this nighttime work, the consequences are crankiness; slowed reaction time; hampered

creativity, inability to remember, analyze, do math, or make decisions; and most of all, daytime drowsiness.

Sleep deprivation causes an estimated 100,000 accidents a year on the road, according to the National Transportation and Safety Board. Insomniacs are 3.5 to 4 times as likely to be in a car accident and 1.5 times more likely to be in a workplace accident. In one survey, more than half of North Carolina drivers who had been in a car accident had slept less than six hours the previous night.

An inadequate amount of sleep can shorten your life in more ways than one. A University of Chicago study of 11 healthy men, ages 17-28, found that when their sleep was restricted to four hours for six nights in a row, they aged rapidly. Their levels of hypertension, diabetes, and memory problems rose to levels usually associated with 60-year-olds. Fortunately, as reported in the medical journal *Lancet*, the subjects were refreshed after a few nights of 12-hour slumbers.

Growing evidence shows that a lack of sleep makes us more vulnerable to infection, as well as high blood pressure, anxiety, weight gain, and stress. Insomniacs have a 40 percent higher risk of developing depression says Gary Zammit, director of the Sleep Disorders Institute at St. Luke's Roosevelt and Beth Israel Hospital in New York.

Get a better night's sleep. The best way to get maximum rest is to practice the following:

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day. Use bright light in the morning and dim bulbs in the evening to cue your body's internal clock.
- Refrain from acidic foods, such as orange juice and tomato sauce, or spicy foods. These may induce heartburn that disrupts sleep. Eat your last meal at least three hours before bedtime and make it a small.
- Exercise regularly. This deepens and extends sleep.
- Review your medications with a doctor. Antihistamines, decongestants, blood pressure medicine, beta-blockers, and pain medications can disturb your sleep.
- Establish a relaxing nighttime ritual, perhaps reading or listening to gentle music.
- Consider buying a mattress with individual pocketed coils to avoid being disturbed by your partner's movement.
- Choose a pillow, preferably down, that keeps your head, neck, and spinal cord in a straight line. Replace the pillow if it won't spring back when you fold it.
- From three to six hours before lights-out, cut off any stimulants, such as nicotine, coffee, soft drinks, and tea. Also, avoid alcohol after dinner. It may make you fall asleep quickly, but it causes light, fragmented dozing.
- If you don't fall asleep within 15 minutes, don't fret. Go to another room to read or listen to soothing music.

A Christmas Tale

Dennis S. Murray Sr., Washington, DC

Once upon a time there was a lady name Gertrude Wilson from the North Pole of USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) who traveled to Washington, D.C. on vacation. While sledding around the city and enjoying the sights, she discovered much happiness and sadness. She stopped in front of a building called The Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary of Washington, D.C. She had never heard of or seen such a place, and was curious. So she started toward the door and a young lady came out and greeted her. "Hello!"

The young lady asked Gertrude where she was from while admiring her pretty red outfit. Gertrude replied, "the North Pole of ARS." The young lady invited her to come in. The two women talked and laughed about everything including the history of the Women's Auxiliary. The young lady asked **Gertrude** what she did at the North Pole. **Gertrude** replied, "I am Head of Santa's Doll Dress Division."

"That's remarkable," the young lady exclaimed. "We have a program called Toyland and we need help to supply needy children with toys." **Gertrude** smiled and said, "we have been making clothes for dolls since 1993, a total of 103 dolls and 11 teddy bears, plus 30 Christmas stockings stuffed with toys, candy, and items of clothing for needy kids in the Washington metropolitan area."

Overjoyed the young lady asked, "Are you that **Gertrude Wilson** that the people have been talking about all over this building? We have seen the dolls first hand, and they are beauti-

ful. Our Toyland program has benefited from you and your participation for some time now. It is so nice to finally meet you. The Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary of Washington, D.C. is glad that you and your friends are helping us to put a smile on children's faces during the holiday



Beautiful dolls, dressed and ready to brighten Christmas for Washington-area children.

season."

"We are happy to help," **Gertrude** replied. "The elves at the North Pole of ARS and the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) find joy and laughter in making a child happy. The Christmas season is for giving and that is what this program is all about." The young lady replied, "Yes you are right. The Christmas Dolls and Teddy Bear program of the Women's Auxiliary has created smiles and joy for children all through the metro area." **Gertrude** and the young lady hugged before saying goodbye. The young lady walked **Gertrude** to her sleigh. As **Gertrude** got in her sleigh the young lady started to shed tears of happiness.

Gertrude started up her sleigh

and headed towards National Airport. Suddenly, her sleigh took to the sky over the Potomac River. In less than 20 minutes she was back home at the North Pole of ARS. As soon as she touched down at the North Pole of ARS, Independence Avenue, SW, she contacted her elves at GIPSA, where **Leah Akbar, Monica Christian, Barbara Fielder, Catherine Grasso, Tanika Harris, Louise Jones, Donna Melton, Irene Omade', Peggy Smith, and Sharon Vassiliades** had banded together to dress dolls for the 2000 Christmas season.

Gertrude and her elves got started and never looked back. They dressed the dolls with beautiful colors and accessories. The elves made ordinary dolls come alive from the goodness of their hearts and soul. With the help of people like **Gertrude** and her GIPSA elves, the Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary of Washington, D.C. has provided over 6,000 children with toys in the Washington Metropolitan Area.

Gertrude Wilson and the **elves of GIPSA** hope that next year you will join them in the Toyland Program. This is the Christmas of 2000 and we wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

If you would like to donate your time in making this wonderful cause special to our needy children and their families, please call **Gertrude Wilson** of ARS (202) 720-7086 or one of her GIPSA elves **Donna Melton**, at (202) 720-6529.

Christmas dolls and teddy bears make the world a better place.

Hispanic Heritage Month Observance

Linda Alston, Washington, DC



Kenmore Middle School's Hispanic Heritage Month Essay Contest Winners

In observance of Hispanic Heritage month, GIPSA entered into an agreement with Kenmore Middle School in Arlington, VA, to sponsor an essay writing contest for their students. The essay asked students of Latino heritage to describe their family's cultural heritage and the importance of the Latino culture in their life. Non-Latino students were asked to describe the importance of the Latino culture in their lives and communities.

Since many of the Latino students had different levels of proficiency speaking English, they were grouped into four different writing level categories to make the contest fair to all students. Four first place winners were chosen, two second place, and three third place.

The Civil Rights Staff presented the students award plaques, USDA t-shirts, and hand-held calculators.

While reading the students essays, one thing was certain: they are proud of themselves, their families, their culture, and their heritage. Here are a few excerpts from the winning Latino essays:

"[My Dad] is a great father. He always wants the best for my sister and I...and to have him involved in our lives. He's always there when we need him. He talks to us about the bad...things that happen in the world around us. He's probably not the perfect father; but since my sister and I were little girls he has given us his love. He works hard for us, but he always has time for us." **B. Rodriguez**

"One of the important things of Latin American culture in my life is to show the people where you come from and what you may be able to do as a Latin. Also...do not be embarrassed about your language or traditions that your ancestors left you years and years ago." **M. Fuentes**

"The Honduran people celebrate the 24th of December as the most special day in the whole year...for the Spanish people this is a date to forgive and forget all the bad

things. You as a Latino need to gather with your family and talk about everything that is going on in your life. You then go to the table and pray with your family...you get to eat the most delicious meal ever...you dance...you have fun all day long". **M. Ortiz**

The Kenmore Middle School plans to have a similar essay contest for African American History Month and Women's History Month.

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 December 26, 2000!

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