



# GIPSA *NEWS*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION EMPLOYEES

FEBRUARY 2015

## *INSIDE THIS*

### *ISSUE:*

- ◆ *FGIS Matters...!*
- ◆ *Names in the News*
- ◆ *Shout-Out!*
- ◆ *National Grain Center Report*
- ◆ *Issuance Report*
- ◆ *Training Updates*

## Management and Budget Services Updates

Marianne Plaus, Washington, DC

The pace of activity at the start of this new year is brisk, to say the least. On that note, I will jump right into updates about items that may impact or involve you in some manner.



**Budget:** On December 16, 2014, the President signed the Omnibus bill to fund the government through September 2015. After all is said and done, funding levels for the programs will be similar to fiscal year 2014. It is important to note that we cannot enter our full-year budgets into the financial management system until we receive our Treasury Warrant and Apportionment from the Office of Management and Budget. Until we receive the official documentation, we are allowed to enter our enacted budget in 30-day increments only. As of January 16, 2015 we have entered two 30-day increments with the current one running through February 15th. Trust me, we are as anxious as anyone to receive our official notification, which will allow us to enter our full-year allocations into the financial system within the coming weeks. If you should have any questions, please reach out to me.

**Calendar Year (CY) 2014 Transit.** Many of you may have heard in the news about a retroactive maximum transit benefit increase for CY 2014. While we have received nothing official from the Department of Transportation or the Internal Revenue Service, the USDA's Office of Human Resources Management is proactively working on a decision/guidance document. Additional information will be provided as it develops. Terri Henry is your "go to" person for questions.

**Concur Government Edition (CGE).** The "Go-Live" date for the new travel system, CGE, is February 23, 2015. Hands on training will be held February 2-4, 2015, in Washington, D.C. and Kansas City, KS, for travel arrangers. Webinars are scheduled for January and February for arrangers, users, and approvers. The training can also be taken in AgLearn. Travelers are encouraged to take the training. Please reach out to Rose Alexander with your questions.

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP).** The EAP provides professional, confidential counseling services for GIPSA employees who are experiencing personal problems which may be affecting their ability to perform on the job. The program offers assessment, short-term counseling, referral, and follow-up for employees confronted with family and marital problems, substance abuse, stress, depression, and any other emo-

*Continued, see MBS on page 2.*

*MBS from cover page*

tional challenges. Employees are offered six confidential EAP visits with a qualified counselor. The EAP service is available 24 hours a day seven days a week at no cost to employees. To access EAP: 1-800-222-0364 or TTY: 1-888-262-7848

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). GIPSA's FOIA program is off to a slow start in FY 2015. GIPSA has received only eight requests during the first 3 months and has processed and closed all eight. We continue to work with the Office of the General Counsel on a FOIA appeal, which we hope will be completed by the end of the second quarter of FY 2015. MBS thanks to those GIPSA employees who have assisted us with our FOIA search efforts and looks forward to working with you in FY 2015. Please direct questions to Joanne Peterson.

Internal Control Program. You may recall that in FY 2014 GIPSA kicked off the risk assessment process of its internal control program. Many of you participated in this process by assessing the vulnerability of your assigned programs and activities. GIPSA reviewers conducted risk assessments for 322 assessable functions. You did not rate any assessable functions a high risk, which indicates that GIPSA's functions achieved their missions or goals, produced accurate reports or data, allowed only authorized use of resources, and operated according to laws or procedures. Of the 91 functions that scored a medium risk, 13 scored in the high range (70-93). MBS has provided managers a summary of their functions that rated a medium risk so they can evaluate their employees' concerns, develop corrective action plans to resolve the areas needing improvement, and resolve the areas that you brought to their attention as best as they can. Currently, MBS is reviewing the action plans and will recommend to GIPSA senior management any program(s) that should be reviewed pursuant to internal control requirements during the remainder of FY 2015. Please direct questions to Joanne Peterson.

Safety Audits. GIPSA's Safety and Health Officer plans to conduct safety audits in the following offices this year: New Orleans, League City, Toledo, and the Midwestern Regional Office in Des Moines. A safety audit is also planned for Portland to ensure that a workable emergency plan/strategy is in place.

Telework. Our mission area, Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP), has updated the Emergency Dismissal and Closure Procedures and the specifics related to teleworking for the 2015 winter season. The Washington DC-HQ and Field procedures can be found on inGIPSA under Employee Resources, Telework, MRP Resource.

Travel Cards. Travel cardholders are required to make full payment on their account upon receipt of their monthly statement. Delinquency notices are sent to cardholders when the account becomes 60 or more days past due. There is no reinstatement policy for accounts that are cancelled. If you lose your charge card privileges and need to perform official travel, you must charge your common carrier fare to the agency's central billed account and all other travel related costs must be paid by the employee using a personal charge card or personal funds. Please direct your questions to Rose Alexander.

Before I sign off, I just want to say "thank you," and "may 2015 treat you kindly."



## GIPSA Idea Hotline

GIPSA Idea Hotline is open for business.

Please send your suggestions or ideas to

**GIPSA-Ideas@usda.gov**; fax them to **202-690-2173**; or  
telephone them to **1-800-455-3447** or **202-720-7045**.

It is best to send them via fax or email to reduce the possibility of transcription errors; however, ideas will be accepted regardless of the method of transmission.

## FGIS Matters....!

Randall Jones, Washington ,DC



*(Written January 16, 2015)*

**Small Agency - Huge Responsibility.** Last year, U.S. grain exports were valued at approximately \$45 billion. FGIS has around 420 permanent employees so an interesting way to look at our impact is that for every FGIS employee, there was \$107,000,000 worth of grain exported. This only accounts for the grain exports and does not take into consideration the considerable amount of work that we do under the Agricultural Marketing Act such as rice inspection and beans, peas and lentils and other processed commodities. Nor does it take into consideration all of the grain that relies on the U.S. grain standards and the official inspection system while moving in domestic commerce. In comparison, there were 297.9 million metric tons officially inspected last year with a whopping 171.9 MMT or 58 percent in the domestic market. When you look at the number of official inspections the numbers are even more impressive with a total (domestic and export) of more than 3.3 million official inspections and nearly 1.3 million official commercial inspections. As you know, we have great partners in the official agencies who perform the domestic inspections and play a key and vital role in the official inspection system.

We, as keepers of the Official Grain Inspection Program, have a huge responsibility to apply the U.S. Grain Standards and assure that buyers, domestic and foreign, receive the quality that they order and buy. We can all be very proud of the work that we do each day that supports U.S. agriculture.

**Quality is our job.** On February 4 and 5, the **Executive Management Team (EMT)** will meet at the National Grain Center to receive a report from **Samantha Simon**, Director, Quality Assurance and Compliance Division, and a team comprised of Byron Reilly, Barry Gomoll, Brian Adam, Cathy Brenner, Mary Vick, Rob Dorman, and Tim Norden. The goal of the team was to identify all functions within FGIS that relate to quality assurance and identify the Division and staff that are responsible for each function. The team also was tasked with identifying gaps in roles and responsibilities and developing proposed solutions that will help improve our program. The EMT will hear the presentation and will make decisions to ensure that all quality assurance functions are properly identified and assigned. As you can imagine, most of the work that we do within the Program is related to quality assurance so this task has been challenging and will have lasting impact on our Program. I want to thank each of the team members for their contributions and hard work.

**Lone Star State here we come.** On February 11 and 12, **Bob Lijewski**, Director, Field Management Division, and I will travel to League City to meet with all supervisors and managers as well as hold a separate meeting for all employees. I very much look forward to this trip and the opportunity to spend some time with **Dave Grady**, Field Office Manager, and his team.

**Reauthorization.** There is not a lot to report on reauthorization as we continue to work closely with **USDA Office of General Counsel** to identify the possible impact of a lapse in the reauthorization. I hope to have more to report next month.

**2015 Budget Update.** Last month I reported that the 2015 budget was approved which was substantially earlier than in previous years. **Marianne Plaus**, Director, Management and Budget Services, and her team are working diligently to issue full-year allocations to all of the Divisions and offices. We anticipate that the full-year allocations will be allotted within the coming weeks with the program funding levels very similar as compared to FY14.

Until next time, keep up the good work and stay safe!

## Origins of Black History Month

Rickey Siggall, Washington, DC

Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history.

Carter G. Woodson

meetville.com



*Have you ever said or heard someone say, “Why is Black History Month observed during one of the coldest months of the year?” Or, “Why did they choose the shortest month?” Here is why!*

Every year, when February rolls around, we celebrate the contributions made to American history by respectfully shining a spotlight on leaders, servicemen and servicewomen, poets, artists, explorers, scientists, educators and laborers of African descent.

According to the Library of Congress site dedicated to African American/Black History, National African American History Month had its origins in 1915, half a century after the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in the United States, when historian and author Dr. Carter G. Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNH), an organization dedicated to researching and promoting achievements by Black Americans and other peoples of African descent. This organization is now known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). Through this organization Dr. Woodson commenced the first Negro History Week in February 1926. It is said that Dr. Woodson selected the second week in February for the observance because it included the birthday of President Abraham Lincoln (February 12<sup>th</sup>) and the accepted birthday of Frederick Douglass (February 14<sup>th</sup>), two key figures in the history of Black Americans. The week-long celebration inspired schools and communities nationwide to organize local celebrations, host performances and lectures and establish history clubs.

In the three decades that followed, mayors throughout the country began issuing annual proclamations recognizing Negro History Week. By the late 1960s, thanks in part to a budding awareness of Black identity and the Civil Rights Movement, Negro History Week evolved into Black History Month on many college campuses. In 1975, President Gerald R. Ford issued a Message on the Observance of Black History Week urging all Americans to "recognize the important contribution made to our nation's life and culture by Black citizens" and In 1976, President R. Ford officially recognized Black History Month, calling upon the public to “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.”

In 1986 the 99<sup>th</sup> Congress passed Public Law 99-244 which designated February 1986 as "National Black (Afro-American) History Month. This law states in part, “The President of the United States is authorized and requested to issue proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe that month with appropriate ceremonies and activities to salute all that Black Americans have done to help build our country”. Since then, every American president has designated February as African American/Black History Month and endorsed a specific theme. The 2015 theme is “**A Century of Black Life, History, and Culture: The Legacy of Dr. Carter G. Woodson and the Origins, Purpose and Function of Black History in the 21st Century.**”

# A History of Diversity

**Black History Month** like other special emphasis programs is about cultural awareness and appreciation for an underserved group. Taking the time to learn about an underserved group's struggles, success, and path ahead is what is needed to ensure that diversity is not only accepted but embraced. Back in 1976 when the **Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS)** was just getting off the ground recruiters searched far and wide for employees to replace a recently gutted industry. In a search for employees with an agricultural background it only made sense that recruiters reached out to Land Grant Universities which included those that were historically black serving institutions. Based on the recollection of current employees, minority recruitment efforts were geared toward **Alcorn State University, Lincoln University, and Prairie View A&M University.**

Then President Gerald Ford was a proponent of **Equal Rights** and it can be assumed that the efforts towards diversity were in direct response to his beliefs. As a result of these efforts the early classes of graders brought on to work for FGIS were rather diverse. This diversity is what Secretary Vilsack hopes to capitalize on through **Cultural Transformation**. Cultural Transformation emphasizes that not only should we be hiring people of various backgrounds but we should be using their differences to the advantage of the mission. Using difference for the advantage of the mission is what referred to as inclusion. Special emphasis programs highlight differences not to set people apart but to bring them together. Diversity is an asset that doesn't just look good on paper. In action diversity can take a program from good to great by simply letting those differences shine. Often times we get stuck in doing things a certain way and we don't take the time to think about why they are done that way. In observing diversity of procedure we can find new and more efficient ways of accomplishing our mission.

During this black History Month you are encouraged to consider how the values and experiences of someone different from you can help you or our agency to move forward.



**Instructor Training Course**  
July 16-20, 1979

Holiday Inn Kansas City, Kansas

Instructors (Seated Left to Right): Jack Kramer, Paul (Hondo) Pendley, Tim Scullin, Donnell Keith, John Downs  
Sitting behind instructors: Carlos Moura (Inspection)  
Standing (Left to right): James McLaurin (Mobile), Eugene Bass (Olive Branch), Dan Friendly (Beaumont), Nancy Bascom (Kansas City), Robert Spellmeier (Peoria), Martin Begley (Portland), Willie McLaurin (Destrehan), Phil Donehower (Compliance), Marvin Jones (Compliance), Jerry Wadley (Destrehan), Harry Booker (Houston), Willie Larry (Houston), Albert Tripp (Corpus Christi), John Blake (Beaumont), Assad L. Bastawrous (Chicago), Gregory Tomas (Baltimore), Bob Pope (Corpus Christi), John Pitchford (Portland), Clinton Brinkley (New Orleans)



**Instructor Training Course**  
October 23-27, 1978 Kansas City, Missouri

Instructors (Kneeling Left to Right): Eric Poling, G. L. Ratliff, Bill Holt, Jim Wisonett, Bill Hawkins  
Standing (Left to Right): Howard Saylor, Mike Hand, Richey Rich, Cathy Arms, Eurvin Williams, Sarah Danby, Dale Huyck, Ben Miller, David Farris, Robert Carter, Joe Mock, Amado Saenz, Maurice Bontemps

\*Unidentified: Richard Robertson, Ronald Gill, John Goltz, Joseph Dash, and Harold Johnson



**Instructor Training Course**  
May 1979 Kansas City, Missouri

Instructors (Kneeling Left to Right): Will Sumner, Mike Hand, Steve Hoy

2nd Row (L to R): Storm Kildoyle, Robb Hermanson, Larry Bennett, Linda (Buchanan) Wheeler, Phil Moser, Jim Williams, Lezo Foley, Gary Holmes

Back Row (L to R): Leon Gerjets, Art Boline, Jim Porter, Mary Vick, Howard Campbell, Jackie Clements

## Names in the News (continued)

### Retirement



Larry Bull started working for USDA in April 2006 as a part-time sampler and became a full time grader in June 2008. Before coming to work for GIPSA he retired from Riceland Foods with 25 years of service. He is looking forward to camping, fishing and gardening.

### 35 years of Service

**Gale Mason**, Deputy Director, was presented with a certificate and pin for 35 years of Service with the United States Government



### 20 years of Service

**Amy Blechinger**, Program Analyst was presented with a certificate and pin for 20 years of Service with the United States Government



### New Position

**Ceneda “CC” Trufant** was recently appointed as a Supervisory Agricultural Commodity Grader in the New Orleans Field Office. Prior to her new appointment, Ceneda was an Agricultural Commodity Grader and Former Union President in New Orleans. She began her career with GIPSA in 2001 as an Agricultural Commodity Technician after leaving the private sector. In private industry, she worked as an Agricultural Grader. Outside of her grading skills, she also brings her knowledge of export operations and policy and procedures. Ceneda looks forward to sharing her knowledge with her new colleagues and plans on utilizing her grading skills to help train our new ACG’s.



# FOM

**Lynn Thomas** was selected as the new Field Office Manager of the FGIS Toledo Field Office. Lynn began his career with FGIS in 1995 in the Toledo Field Office as an Agricultural Commodity Technician (ATC). In 2001, Lynn became an Agricultural Commodity Grader, and in 2006 he was promoted to the position of Supervisory Agricultural Commodity Grader/Quality Assurance Specialist. Lynn graduated from GIPSA’s Leadership Development Program in 2007, during which he participated in several projects and developmental assignments. In 2012, Lynn was selected as the Assistant Field Office Manager (AFOM) in Toledo. As the AFOM, Lynn has helped lead the office through a significant period of transition as the office dealt with several retirements of senior personnel and the subsequent training of new staff. Lynn worked his way up from humble beginnings as a temporary intermittent ACT all the way to FOM.

## Message from a Retiree

*Glenda Lasseigne, Administrative Officer for the New Orleans Field Office, retired on January 3, 2015, with over forty-one years of service. She shared her memories and feelings eloquently in an email she sent in December. It is included here for everyone to enjoy.*



“Yes, I am finally doing it. After 41 ½ years of federal service, I will be retiring on January 3, 2015. I began my federal career with the Federal Highway Administration in Baton Rouge right out of high school as a GS-2. Building the interstate highways in the 70’s was a huge project for the Department of Transportation. Lo and behold, a federal agency was opening up in my backyard in Lusher. I was almost too late in applying as Conrad Herndon already hired Carla and Angela Vicknair. While working in Baton Rouge, I contacted the Port Allen Elevator and Mr. Gremillion told me to send my application to him and he would make sure Conrad got it. Thanks to old Grem! October 1976 began my journey with FGIS. It’s been a great ride. Time really passes by so fast. Our first few weeks of training in New Orleans was so crazy. I well remember Ms. Mildred making Carla and I print our numbers on those big T&A forms. She said we had to write within the block and make our numbers straight and legible. She made us do it over and over for one whole day. We couldn’t go outside the block but had to fill the block. I pressed so hard with No. 2 pencils that I developed callouses on my fingers. You had to press hard through all the carbons. It felt like we were in first grade taking a penmanship class. We chuckled on the way home and thought what have we signed up for. Life was simple then. We had 3 subcenter numbers. Now we have 34 shorthand codes with 27 digits each. Who in the world can remember all those numbers in their head? You can’t even type them correctly – you better cut and paste because the letter O and zeros look alike after a while.

When I first started in 1976, we were doing massive hiring from colleges all over the country. Naïve and green as I was, I thought to myself “Gee, we are hiring some crazy and wild people out of college.” You have turned out to be some of the most professional and dedicated hard-working individuals. I loved working with all of you. GIPSA has been good to me. I went from Head Clerk (what a horrible title) to Administrative Officer.

2014 was one of the busiest years for grain exports. I’ve worked all my life and now it’s time to play (while I am able to). I want to spend time with my family and meet friends at places other than funeral homes. Just because I am leaving doesn’t mean we can’t keep in touch. I would love to hear from you. My email address is [glassaigne@bellsouth.net](mailto:glassaigne@bellsouth.net).

*Glenda L Lasseigne*

## GIPSA’s New, Smarter Website

Mathew Shepley, Washington, DC

In mid-December, the new version of the GIPSA website was released. This update added a lot of maintenance value to the GIPSA website, as well as, aesthetically aligning it with the Department’s website. The update required all of the website’s many pages to be converted from static HTML to the ASP.NET framework format. The initial time investment of this move has many advantages that GIPSA can now utilize.

One of the most important advantages of this new technology is drastically reducing the amount of code written by providing built-in controls and re-usable components. This will increase turnaround on content changes and reduce inconsistencies between separate pages that show the same information (e.g. navigation panels). Another advantage with this update is built-in Windows authentication which ensures that GIPSA’s content is safe and secured. On top of more security, we also gain better performance by taking advantage of new website serving technologies that provide more consistent results so that GIPSA always has a presence on the Web.

Happy browsing!

The screenshot displays the GIPSA website interface. At the top, it features the USDA logo and navigation links for Home, Newsroom, Federal Grain Inspection Service, Packers & Stockyards Program, Site Map, A-Z Index, Advanced Search, Help, and Search Tips. A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the navigation is a 'Popular Topics' section with links to Federal Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards, Laws and Regulations, and Publications. A central image shows a person in a hard hat and safety vest on a boat. To the right, there is a 'GIPSA Inspectors Work' section. Below the image, there are sections for 'Updates', 'Reports', 'Enforcement', 'GIPSA News', and 'GIPSA Quick Links'. The 'Updates' section lists several recent news items with dates and titles. The 'GIPSA News' section lists more news items. The 'GIPSA Quick Links' section includes links to Regulatory Entities, Federal Register, Publications, Service Provider Listings, Information Quality, and New Official Moisture Meter. At the bottom, there is a 'Mission Areas and Offices' section with links to Agencies and Offices, Packers and Stockyards Program, and Office of the Administrator.

## Port of Houston hosts Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack

Melanie Schwemer, League City, Texas



On January 22, 2015, several employees in the League City Field Office had the pleasure of being a part of Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack's visit to the Port of Houston, where he expounded on the importance of increasing federal spending on infrastructures, with emphasis specifically targeted at the need to modernize the Port of Houston's transportation systems in an effort to keep up with Global Trade.

This stop, coming off of the State of the Union Address, where President Obama delivered a message of assurance to the American people. He declared our State of the Union as being *strong* marking that *for the first time since 9/11, our combat mission in Afghanistan is over*. His belief is that our country is ready to task itself with *writing our own future*. While this statement covers a broad spectrum of ideas to stabilize and grow our economy, the task Tom Vilsack is undertaking, is the one to build support for the President to gain trade promotion authority to negotiate free trade agreements. With this victory, the idea is that; with the other 11 countries on-board, and with the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) passed, it would "enhance trade and investment" between the 12 countries, this is in addition to promoting jobs and economic growth.

Our own Myron Hall, Supervisory Agricultural Commodity Grader, had the privilege to explain the sampling, weighing and inspection procedures, and the certification process on the commodities FGIS exports from the Louis Dreyfus Facility. With the shared knowledge of Port Executive Director Roger Guenther, Secretary Vilsack learned the depth of the ship channel, the amount of tonnage exported each year and where the port stood with regard to infrastructure improvements. Ultimately seeking what plans, if any have been made for improvements to the infrastructure and the costs associated with it. An aim-goal of Secretary Vilsack's is *relational improvement with Cuba* which stands as part of the hope of the ideology for the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP).

It would be a disservice not to extend a *Tip-of-the-Hat* to the efforts of all parties involved with hosting and participating in this event. Mr. Roger Guenther, Mr. Steve Campbell, USDA FSA, NRCS, USDA FGIS and the entire Louis Dreyfus Staff/Crew did an outstanding job as host and audience. A truism of Houston, Texas is that *it is always raining somewhere in Houston*. This day was no exception. It was cold, at times the rain came down sideways and yet, the event was fluid and the class of audience was top-notch.



### A Shout-Out Goes to...

A shout out goes out to everyone who donated money and/or food items to this year's New Orleans Field Office Food Drive. We set a goal of 1,000 pounds and surpassed it by 453 pounds. We send out a big thank you to all of the employees who helped with collecting, packing and organizing all of the contributions that were taken to the Second Harvest Food Bank.

# The National Grain Center (NGC) Report



## Welcome: Larry Franz

GIPSA welcomes Larry Franz to the Domestic Inspection Operations Office (DI00) at the National Grain Center.

Larry is replacing the soon to be retired Scale Specialist David Skallerud. Even though Larry is stationed at the NGC, most of his time will be spent away from Kansas City testing scales for export inspection in Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, North Dakota, Nebraska, Missouri, Kansas, and Kentucky.

Larry's background with quality assurance and compliance was forged during 22 years he spent with the Missouri Air National Guard, where he weighed airplanes and performed aircraft maintenance. With Larry's experience, a smooth transition of duties and knowledge is ensured.

Growing up in the Midwest, Larry makes his residence in St. Joseph, Missouri, with his wife Penny. Larry's son Brendon currently serves in the military. Aviation is one of Larry's passions and while not in the cockpit flying, he can be found restoring an antique 1947 Cessna 170 airplane in his spare time. Welcome aboard Larry!



## Employee Spotlight: Austyn Hughes

Welcome to the first installment of the "Employee Spotlight" section of the NGC News in the GIPSA newsletter. Each month we will interview a different employee here at the National Grain Center not only to showcase the talented individuals that make up NGC, but also to get to know our fellow coworkers.

This month I sat down with the current NIRT/NMR Lab Coordinator Austyn Hughes. Austyn joined GIPSA just under nine months ago. He grew up in St. Joseph, Missouri, where he later attended Missouri Western State College. Austyn graduated with a bachelor's degree in chemistry and mathematics and a master's degree in chemistry. Here is a sample of the hard-hitting questions we asked him:

GIPSA Newsletter (GN): What are your duties in the NIRT/NMR laboratory?

Austyn Hughes (AH): My main duties are providing locations with Standard Reference Samples (SRS), maintaining the NIRT and NMR result database and assisting the field with any questions or concerns that arise.

GN: Who would you say has had the biggest influence in your life?

AH: My dad is probably my biggest influence in my life. His is the main reason I've been interested in science and math since I was little. In fact, at Missouri Western, I took classes with professors that taught my dad.

GN: Since you have multiple areas of interest in your degree programs, what is your favorite subject?

AH: I would say math, even though I am not as good at it. I think the reason why I like math so much is I really love baseball and particularly baseball statistics.

GH: Why do you like chemistry?

AH: There is a lot of math in it. Again, leading back to baseball.

GN: So I take it you are a big baseball fan then?

AH: I am a huge Kansas City Royals fan and I love anything to do with the Royals. I am way too emotionally involved with that team. I really enjoy looking at baseball statistics and I pretty much have lost entire weekends during the baseball season doing just that.

GN: What is your favorite vacation spot?

AH: My favorite vacation spot would probably be any place that has warm weather and is near the ocean (the author completely agrees as well).

GN: Finally, what did you want to be when you "grew up"?

AH: Well, the first thing I ever remember wanting to be when I grew up was a police officer, but for most of my childhood I wanted to be an astronaut.

Special thanks to Austyn for taking some time out of his schedule to chat with us here at the GIPSA Newsletter and of course, Go Royals!

# The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

## NGC Celebrates American Indian & Alaskan Native Heritage (AIANH)



Preston Tone-Pah-Hote Sr.; Gary Hinshaw; and Justin Beemer Tone-Pah-Hote displaying a painting by William Beemer Tone-Pah-Hote.

Over the last few years Justin Beemer Tone-Pah-Hote has presented a wide variety of topics at our annual AIANH lunch and learns. He has brought in his family's collection of American Indian regalia and heirlooms, performed dance exhibitions, lectured about his tribe, the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma, and talked about American Indians and Alaskan Natives and their presence in the Federal Government. This year, he brought in an exhibit of over a dozen original water color paintings by William Beemer Tone-Pah-Hote (B. 1930 – D. 1982), his uncle. This mini-exhibit was coupled with a few explanations of the various scenes in some select paintings. His father, Preston Tone-Pah-Hote Sr., a retired federal employee also attended to talk about his brother's work.



Preston Tone-Pah-Hote Sr. talking with NGC employees.

Gary Hinshaw gave a presentation on Janie Simms Hipp, a Native American agricultural law attorney. She is the founding director of Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative at the University of Arkansas School of Law. Among her accomplishments Ms. Hipp was Senior Advisor for Tribal Relations to USDA Secretary Vilsack.

## “Digital Media Tools Help Grain Inspectors Interpret Quality”



Most consumers may not realize it but in many ways, inspecting grain hasn't changed much over the years. Even though there are sophisticated scientific tests today to measure moisture, oil content, protein and several other intrinsic qualities, the human eye still carries the most weight when judging a grain sample for classification and grade.

To help ensure consistency and uniformity throughout the grading process, individual graders need unchanging references. Digital media is an important tool used to reduce variability and maintain consistency.

The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration's (GIPSA) library of more than 200 printed *Visual Reference Images* (VRI) represent grading delineations for grains, oil seeds, pulses and rice. They are maintained by the Federal Grain Inspection Service's (FGIS) Digital Media Group (DMG), working with FGIS' Board of Appeals and Review. Official grain inspectors across the U.S. use these prints. But official grain inspectors aren't our only customers. Anyone interested in or affiliated with the production, handling or buying of grain anywhere in the world will benefit from the training and informational products we offer.

For those in private sector and the general public, an online version of the printed [Visual Reference Library](#) is also available through the [GIPSA website](#). The same set of VRI descriptive text used by Official grain inspection, as well as 180 additional VRI, illustrating *Insects Injurious to Stored Grain, Commodity Type Samples, and Other Factors*, are available for review. The VRI are also offered in [ebook versions](#) for IOS, Android, and Kindle.

Internet distribution has also opened the door to other avenues for training and informative content of interest to the grain industry. 70 interactive eLearning courses covering topics such as *Grain Quality and Marketing, Grain Grading-Damage Identification* and

Continued see **Digital Media** on page 11

# The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

*Digital Media from page 10*

Grain Grading Study Questions are available on GIPSA's [Education and Outreach](#) page. They are designed to help inspectors or anyone interested in furthering their knowledge or sharpening their inspection skills-

In addition to print and interactive products, DMG creates video content. A broad range of topics can be found on our [Video Library](#) page. Viewers can learn about the history of our nation's grain trade, equipment used in the typical inspection lab, Federal laws and regulations associated with the industry, or careers in GIPSA. Videos are streamed directly from the library or can be downloaded, giving viewers the option to watch programs offline.

## “My New LincPass Doesn't Work!!”

*by Robin G. Rother - IT Specialist, Kansas City, MO*



This is a phrase we in IT will hear fairly often when a new employee first receives their LincPass card or when a person transfers from another USDA agency.

Commonly, when this happens, it is because the 10 digit PIV number that is unique to the card has not been input into the Active Directory account associated with the employee name. The card number can be found in ActivIdentity under Personal Info or the person who gives you your LincPass card will be able to get the number and should be notifying IT that the card has arrived so the IT staff can input the number into Active Directory.

Another problem that could be occurring is that the employee transferred from another agency and had registered his or her eAuthentication account originally with a different email address. The email address in the eAuthentication account **must be** your GIPSA email account. If it is not your GIPSA email account, you must go into the eAuthentication system and make the change yourself.

Another reason it may not work is if your name was misspelled either during the creation of your network account, in the creation of your email account, or even during the HR process. This is rare but can happen and this can take time to get corrected. When a person logs on with their card, the system verifies the PIV number that is stored with the Active Directory account as well as the email account against the PIV number and email account in the eAuthentication system and they will need to match. All of these methods of verification are safeguards that have been put in place to assure that your card cannot be easily duplicated and used by someone else. Knowing and understanding the systems behind the LincPass card can help everyone in the activation process and will cut down on the number of calls to the Help Desk after activation.

# The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

## Celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Day: Citizenship and Service



There was a capacity turnout for the annual Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Day luncheon on January 14, 2015 including six employees from the National Grain Center. This event has been organized each year since 1986 by the Diversity Education and Cultural Awareness (DECA) and Federal Executive Board (FEB). The sponsoring agency this year was the USDA AMS Dairy Programs. The luncheon was held at the Jack Reardon Conference Center in Kansas City, Kansas. Students from a local Marine Corps ROTC opened with a flag presentation. Following lunch, Keynote Speaker, Mildred Edwards, gave an outstanding presentation that covered little-known facts about Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement.

The theme of the even this year was Citizenship and Service in Action. To go along with this, Larry Hisle coordinated a volunteer project to turn our “day off” into a “day on” at the food bank, Harvesters. A two-hour time slot was available, and volunteers helped sort donated goods. There were also volunteers from Kansas City schools and colleges. Our volunteer time was concluded with a presentation that impressed us with the work that this food bank does. Harvesters has provided over 15 million pounds of food to pantries in the Kansas City metro area, through food drives and collections from food industries. The Harvesters program also provides “BackSnack” food for needy school children, meals for Seniors, and nutritional education. Along with a partner facility in Topeka, Kansas, Harvesters helps families in need in the two-state area.



## FSA Tour

Fred Felix (BAR) gave a presentation of the grain inspection process to representatives from the Farm Service Agency. During their visit they were given a tour of NGC. As part of the tour Valerie Collins (below) gave them an overview of the Reference Labs conveying the importance of their function in grain inspection.

**If you would like to make a contribution to “The National Grain Center (NGC) Report” please send information to Roger Friedrich, Leader, GIPSA, Digital Media Group**

**NGC  
Report**

## Western Regional Office Holiday Service



In years past, the employees of the Western Regional Office adopted a family for the holidays. This year, they conducted a food drive for a local food bank to benefit those in need. Several boxes full of non perishable food items, cleaning supplies and toiletries were collected as well as \$25 cash and \$30 in gift cards. The items collected were delivered to Parker Task Force on December 19th, just in time for Christmas. The photo shows those items collected and donated.

Parker Task Force is a non-profit organization operated solely by volunteers. Its mission is to provide individuals and families in the Parker, Elizabeth and Franktown communities in Colorado with food, limited financial assistance and other support services to help them become more self-sufficient. You can read more about the Parker Task Force at [www.parkertaskforce.org](http://www.parkertaskforce.org).

## MRP CFC Domino Tournament and Championship Game



In support of the National Capital Area Combined Federal Camping (CFC); Kim Harmon of Agricultural Marketing Services (AMS) and Samantha Simon of Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA), from a suggestion made by Larry Mitchell, put together the first Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) Dominoes Tournament. Soliciting players from the three MRP sister Agencies; a single elimination tournament of eight teams began.

Thursday, January 15, 2015, the final two teams; Team AMS (Kim Harmon and Lee Brothers) and Team GIPSA/Office of the Secretary (Kevin Smith and Jennifer Yezak) played the championship game. Due to a last minute scheduling conflict Jennifer was only able play the first few hands leaving Randal Jones to finish one hand and Susan Keith to serve as a final alternate. Although Team AMS started out ahead; team GIPSA/ OSEC came made a comeback and took the trophy. With entry fees and point buying donations, GIPSA collected \$96 that will be donated to the CFC general fund. All who played had a great time and hope to see the event used for future initiatives.

A big thank you to Kim Harmon, Samantha Simon, and Larry Mitchell for their contributions toward this event. And special acknowledgement to all the players for their time.



## Eastern Regional Office CFC Recognition



Scott Raymond, 2014 CFC Chairperson and Regina Willis, ERO Agency Coordinator

The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) ended December 31, 2015, and the Packers & Stockyards, Eastern Regional Office reached and surpassed its goal of \$4500 with a final total of \$7196.20.

The CFC Victory Celebration was held January 8, 2015, at the Salvation Army Kroc Center, and attended by JC Cannon, Auditor and Regina Willis, Program Assistant. Cary Ainsworth, Marketing Specialist, did not attend the victory celebration, but was instrumental in this year's campaign.

The Eastern Regional Office received two awards; **Outstanding Excellence Award**, given to an agency recognized for meeting their monetary goal plus having a participation level of at least 50 percent or 5 percent higher than last year's participation rate by November 21, 2014; and the **Share the Care Award**, given to an agency recognized for meeting or exceeding their monetary goal by November 21, 2014.

During The Eastern Regional Office's successful campaign year they had more cash donors than in previous years with average contribution being \$300. Most contributors opted for no incentive award. ERO proudly had one weekly drawing winner this year





WHITE HOUSE SUMMIT

*on ASIAN AMERICANS and PACIFIC ISLANDERS*

MAY 12, 2015 | WASHINGTON, DC

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## New Orleans Food Drive

The New Orleans Field Office set a goal of 1,000 pounds and surpassed it by 453 pounds. A big thank you goes out to all of the employees who helped with collecting, packing and organizing all of the contributions that were taken to the Second Harvest Food Bank.



## Cisco Phone Forwarding

*You're working off site, outside of a USDA facility but you forgot to forward your Cisco phone to another phone such as your home your cell phone, how can you fix this without going back to the office?*

The Cisco phones are managed by AT&T and they provided a web based log in portal. First however, you need to check your browser for one setting. In Internet Explorer in the upper right corner you'll see the gear:



Click on that and you'll see:

Compatibility View settings

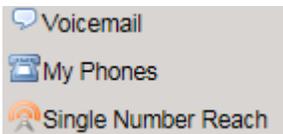
Click on this setting and in the following box add: att.com

if it's not already there and then hit the "close" button at the bottom.

Next, log into the following site using your phone number and password available from IT.

<https://ucvuadmin.uccentral.att.com/accounts/login/>

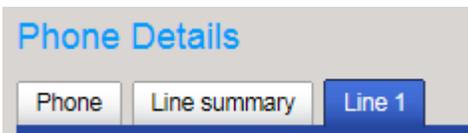
Next, on the left side, click on "My Phones".



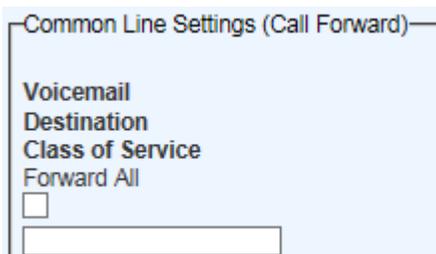
Then click on the hyperlinked (blue) "Unique Device Name".



Click on "Line 1":



Scroll down until you see the following and now you can set up your "call forwarding":



If you have a home phone and a cell phone, you can test the functionality by calling from an outside phone and then having it route to the target phone that you have above as "destination".

**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)**

(800) 222-0364

(888) 262-7848 (TTY)

<http://www.FOH4You.com>

Confidential toll-free number 24 hours a day/7 days a week



\*\*Issuance Change No. 4 to the Pea and Lentil Handbook, dated July 15, 2014

\*\*Issuance Change No. 4 to the Bean Inspection Handbook, dated November 17, 2014

**Have an idea?**

Then fill out your change request  
available at *inGIPSA* and email it to:  
[EGIS-CCWG@usda.gov](mailto:EGIS-CCWG@usda.gov)

## Training Updates

Caroline Thorpe, Washington, DC

Mandatory Training Due		
Course	Due Date	Trainees
<b>Civil Rights:</b> No Fear Act Comprehensive	<b>Within 30 days of hiring (USDA)</b>	New Employees (57 complete-64 incomplete)
<b>Cultural Transformation and Civil Rights: 1 Course -TBD</b>	September 30, 2015	All Employees
<b>Cultural Transformation: <u>Maximizing Employee Engagement</u></b>	September 30, 2015	All Supervisors, Managers, and Executives (14 complete – 97 incomplete)
<b>Cultural Transformation: 1 Course -TBD</b>	September 30, 2015	All Hiring Managers
<b>CyberSecurity: <u>FY2015 Informational Security Awareness</u></b>	March 31, 2015	All Employees (284 complete-441 incomplete)
<b>LincPass Training</b>	December 15, 2014 (Past due)	All Employees w/computer access (164 employees are incomplete)
<b>Performance Training: <u>Performance Management in USDA.</u></b>	<b><u>Due: May 15, 2015</u></b>	All Employees whose Performance Training was incomplete for FY2014 due to technical issues. (360 completes-340 incompletes)
<b>Safety-New Course: <u>“Active Shooter: What You Can Do.”</u></b> This is on AgLearn and replaces the Youtube video.	April 30, 2015	All Employees

### Training and Development Tools in a Nutshell from USDA and GIPSA

If you're not in an organized development program, what options and tools do you have to move forward in your career? Below is a standard list of ongoing resources employees may use to identify career moves and make sure they take the next step.

**1) Identifying next steps based on job series:** Considering a move in your current government series or to another series. First look at your own Position Description and also find the series on OPM's website for the next grade higher. Carefully review the documents to clearly identify associated competencies and review this with someone in your office on what those skills are. For those in FGIS that do grain grading you may want go to the *InGIPSA* website at <https://ingipsa.gipsa.usda.gov/training.aspx> and under “steer your career” click on Career Information for ACGs, ACTs, and ACAs.

**2) Goal Setting:** Individual Development Plans (IDPs) - Set developmental and training goals using your IDP and follow through. It is easy to identify activities but often the issue is executing or following- up on those plans. See if you can commit to a trusted friend to verify if you are following up on your developmental or training goals whether they are on your IDP (job related and organizational) or personal goals (financial, health, career or personal (house, family hobby). Further, the Department will be rolling out a coaching program over the next year. Initially this will probably be open to those in leadership training programs. Coaching, is a teaching, training or development process via which an individual is supported while achieving a specific personal or professional result or goal. As a result, the coach often asks a lot of questions to clarify next moves that help the coaches identify their next best moves. This is for usually a short duration less than six months. The object here is to meet to move forward with your goals, ideally to become a more engaged employee.

*Continued, see Training on page 17*

Training from cover page 16

**3) Mentoring:** Some of you may participate formally and others may opt out of the formal process and do this informally (finding someone with the skills you want and simply talking with them). Either way, this is a great opportunity for you to get information on both the technical skills or soft skills or career development of an employee. Mentoring is defined as an individual who facilitates personal and professional growth by sharing knowledge and insights learned through the years. The assumption is that, unlike coaching, the mentor has some form of information or advice needed by the mentee.

**4) Developmental Opportunities:** With support and assistance of the supervisor, the employee's present job can be restructured or arrangements made to have the employee temporarily transferred to another area to learn firsthand the necessary technical and managerial competencies required for effective performance in that job.

Examples of developmental activities include the following list:

- **Shadowing:** Providing a trainee or learner with the opportunity to observe a well qualified, journeyman level employee perform a particular skill. Immediately after the shadowing period, the learner needs to have the opportunity to perform the same skill and be given feedback on that performance.
- **Detail/Rotational Assignments:** Short-term assignment particularly appropriate for important skills that make up a small portion of an individual's job, but can lead to full-time work in that field.
- **Task Force Assignments:** This is particularly effective if the learner has an opportunity to work with well qualified people who will provide feedback to the learner on his/her performance and participation in the group.

**5) Development of Job Aides:** Requires that the learner develop a product that will assist in the performance of the job, while, at the same time, serving as a vehicle for learning job-related information.

- Cross-Program Assignments
- Special Work Projects
- Coaching Lower Level Employees

**6) Finally, Communication, Communication, Communication:** Studies show that one skill clearly associated with job success and leadership is communication. Consider taking courses on AgLearn to strengthen both written and oral communication. If you want to enter leadership polish your briefing skills by joining Toastmasters, which is only about \$50 per year. See if you can find someone in your office who writes well and may be able to work with you on a basic writing program.

Many of these items are not new, but reviewing what is available now since you completed your IDP may be of value if you feel the need to adjust your activities throughout the year.

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 Civil Rights Staff at 202-690-3640



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:

**Jennifer S. Hill**

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**By December 16, 2014**



**Retiring?** To be included on our email distribution list after you retire from GIPSA, please send your email address to [Jennifer.s.hill@usda.gov](mailto:Jennifer.s.hill@usda.gov).

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