



GIPSA NEWS

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

MARCH 2014

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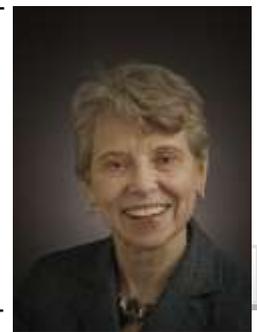
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Suffrage and Sausage

Susan Keith, Washington, DC

One hundred one years ago on March 3, 1913, as Woodrow Wilson arrived in Washington for his inauguration, hundreds of suffragists marched down Pennsylvania Avenue to build momentum for a constitutional amendment assuring the vote for women. The women marching that day were insulted, abused, and assaulted by opponents lining the street. The police did not act to stop the assaults, and eventually, Army troops from Fort Myer were brought in to stop the violence.



Susan Keith

Six years later, on June 4, 1919, Congress passed a Joint Resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States providing that the right to vote “shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.” By March of the following year, 35 States had ratified the Amendment, and when Tennessee certified ratification on August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment was finally added to the Constitution.

The amendment assuring women the right to vote was first introduced in Congress in 1878. It took more than 40 years for the suffrage movement to gain the support necessary for passage. My grandmothers were part of the first generation of American women to have the constitutionally guaranteed right to participate in the electoral process. This history is really very recent.

Since 1917, when Representative Jeannette Rankin of Montana became the first woman to serve in Congress, a total of 298 women have served as U.S. Representatives or Senators. Today, women serve important leadership positions in both the House and Senate. Nancy Pelosi was the first woman to serve as Speaker of the House of Representatives. Women chair six of the Standing Committees in the Senate and another woman chairs the Select Committee on Intelligence. Three of these committee chairs represented the Senate in negotiations on recent significant legislation:

- December — Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 (P.L. 113-67)
Senator Murray of Washington, chair of the Senate Budget Committee
- January — Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (P.L. 113-76)
Senator Mikulski of Maryland, chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations
- February — Agricultural Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-79)

Continued, see Suffrage on page 2.

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

Suffrage from cover page

Senator Stabenow of Michigan, chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

During Women's History Month we celebrate and acknowledge these milestones in history, but the course of history is also written in the everyday lives of women and men who helped to weave the fabric of this country. As requested by Congress, President Reagan issued a proclamation establishing the week beginning March 7, 1982 as "Women's History Week" and recognizing the vital role of women in American History: "American women of every race, class, and ethnic background helped found and build our Nation in countless recorded and unrecorded ways..."

When I think of the ways that women have demonstrated courage, commitment, and character, I think of my great-great grandmother who emigrated from Germany, met and married my great-great grandfather and moved with him to a small farm in Grundy County, Iowa. They fabricated a shelter from sod, and together they raised the vegetables and animals for food for their family. She made clothing for her children from the wool from a small flock of sheep. She died in her mid-thirties. I know very little about this woman who had the courage to leave her home and travel to a distant country and the commitment to endure an arduous life on the prairie, but I admire her and the countless others whose histories were never written but who contributed in so many ways to the history of this country.

The work that we do at GIPSA may not be historic, but we all contribute to the mission of the Department of Agriculture to provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on sound public policy, the best available science, and efficient management. Whether you test grain, help develop grain standards, audit livestock markets, or investigate meat packers, you help to assure that the United States has a reliable supply of food. GIPSA employees help to provide economic stability in rural areas by assuring that farmers can rely on the tests used to grade their grain and that livestock sellers and contract growers will be paid. This is important work that GIPSA employees do very well.

This spring many GIPSA employees will be selected to participate in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey – Employees Influencing Change. If you are selected, you will have the privilege of helping to gauge the effectiveness of GIPSA as an organization. Please consider this an opportunity to provide valuable feedback and take the time to complete the survey. If you are not selected, or if you want to provide more immediate feedback, work with your Employee Engagement Action Team to offer suggestions. Together, we can make GIPSA a great place to work.

Names in the News

Retirements

Jim Whalen retired on January 10, 2014, with over 25 years of federal service. Jim is from Orrick, Missouri, and participated in the original FGIS pilot program that resulted in the establishment of the positions of Agency Quality Assurance Specialist and FGIS Quality Assurance Specialist (QAS). Following the pilot program, he began his career with the Federal Government July 3, 1988, as an Agricultural Commodity Grader with FGIS in the Kansas City Field Office. Initially he filled the position of Protein Coordinator and back-up QAS, but was ultimately placed in the QAS position. In October 2007, Jim was awarded a position as a Senior Member on the Board of Appeals and Review. In April of 2012, he accepted a temporary assignment as Acting Chairman of the Board of Appeals and Review and on August 23, 2012, he was selected to the position permanently.

Following retirement, Jim plans on volunteering at his church, woodworking, hunting, and fishing.

Luis Valdes will retire from his position as Senior Compliance Officer with the Investigations and Enforcement Branch, Quality Assurance and Compliance Division March 22, 2014. He began his career in investigations as a US Army Military Policeman in 1975, following many training schools culminating with the US Army Criminal Investigations Command in early 1981. He retired from the US Army after 18 years as Criminal Investigations Senior Special Agent in August 1998, after having reached the top of the chain in the enlisted sector as a Command Sergeant Major. He began his second career in May 1999, with the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) USDA, working as a Compliance Officer for the Compliance Division. In August 19, 2007, he accepted a promotion to the position of Senior Compliance Officer in GIPSA working for the Compliance Branch Office, under Greg Tomas. He completed 14 1/2 years of service with USDA upon his decision to retire. During his retirement, Luis plans to move to the Republic of Panama, where he plans to continue doing bank fraud investigations, company security assessments and polygraph examinations, while assuring him a lot of time under the sun at the Panamanian beaches with friends and family.

Issuance Report

Terri Henry, Washington, DC

FGIS Program Notice 14-07, "Ordering Plastic Bags, Coin Envelopes, Spear Envelopes, Plastic Quart Bottles, and Plastic Cable Ties" dated January 13, 2014

FGIS Policy Memorandum Reference No. 258, 88 Hour Rule for Containers, dated January 14, 2014

FGIS Directive 1410.2, "Technical Reports" dated January 14, 2014

Program Notice 14-05, "Transition to New Standard Carrier Weights Beginning February 1, 2014" dated January 14, 2014

FGIS Program Notice 14-01, "Reveal Q+ for Aflatoxin Green Test Method" dated January 16, 2014

Departmental Regulation, 4080-811-002, Telework Program, dated January 30, 2014

FGIS Directive 9180.74, Service Fees and Billing Codes, dated February 3, 2014

Names in the News

New Assignments



Marc Marullo has been newly appointed as Shift Supervisor in Brunswick, Georgia. His appointment became effective February 2014.

Portland Agricultural Commodity Grader Jimmy Pan was recently promoted to Supervisory ACG which was effective on February 9, 2014. Jimmy replaced Ray Kirkpatrick who retired November 30²⁰¹³.



New Hires

The newest employees joining the NOFO staff:



Shannon Edwards



Vanderbill Jackson



Andre Pearson



Oscar Porter



Donald Russell



Jeremy Scroggs

Names in the News

Condolences



Harrell Dean Duncan, age 80, passed away September 27, 2012, at Fairview Hospital in Edina, MN from pneumonia after a long battle with multi-infarct dementia. Harrell Dean Duncan former Field Office Manager in the Minneapolis and Wichita Field Offices started with the USDA to support his family. Duncan is survived by daughters, Shannon Atwill (Doug) and Minette Harper (David); son, Kirk Duncan (Jean); siblings, Floyd E. Duncan (Ruby) and Lois Eller. A memorial service was held November 16, 2013, at Asbury United Methodist Church (2801 W. 15th St. N., Wichita, KS). - See more at: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/kansas/obituary.aspx?n=harrell-dean-duncan&pid=167937409#sthash.oGgPGSMc.dpuf>

Links of Interest

Rice Grading improvement Blog

The USDA blog has posted an entry by Dr. David Funk of GIPSA's own NGC. The post provides an overview of Dr. Funk's the newly developed technology that will surely improve rice grading. The blog can be found at the link below:

<http://blogs.usda.gov/2014/02/12/usda-innovation-improves-rice-grading/>



Makers

MAKERS: Women Who Make America tells the remarkable story of the most sweeping social revolution in American history, as women have asserted their rights to a full and fair share of political power, economic opportunity, and personal autonomy.

<http://www.pbs.org/makers/home>

"This documentary encouraged me to join a women's political organization, that I have been a member of for almost a year now. IWO stands for Independent Women's Organization, we advocate through various forums from protesting to going to baton rouge, for the rights and welfare of all women."

-Kaleena Arnold, New Orleans Field Office

GIPSA's very own **Richard Aguilera**, Grain Inspector, Toledo Field Office made the This Week @ USDA video for the week of February 28th. Follow the link below to see the clip that shows Richard inspecting a barge on a frozen river in Chicago.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrvOvJT-Mx0>



March is Official Service Provider “Customer Survey Month!”

John B. Pitchford, FGIS



The official grain inspection and weighing system is a unique public/private network comprised of a strong partnership between the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) and the delegated and designated Official Service Providers (OSP). Since the true quality and value of any service is best measured by the customer, the official system has long relied on customer input to better understand their needs and the system’s performance.

FGIS has developed a voluntary, web-based survey for customers of the official grain and weighing system (See [“Take Our Survey!”](#) under Popular Topics on the main [GIPSA website](#)) to capture feedback from official grain inspection and weighing customers about the quality of services you provide to them. As you will see, the survey has two “tracks” – one for customers of the official system, and one for any other individual on a global basis (including service providers!) to provide suggestions, feedback, or to convey market needs that we currently may not be addressing.

The survey will be available indefinitely, but we have designated March 2014 as official “Customer Survey Month” and we ask that you to share this information with all official grain inspection and weighing customers and encourage them to participate. It includes 12 questions covering such topics as timeliness, quality, and value of the service that they receive, and takes about 10 minutes to complete.

Responders can identify themselves or remain anonymous. After we analyze the results, we will share them with relevant stakeholders on an aggregate basis, and with individual OSP’s to the extent we can match customers with service provider.

Thank you!

GIPSA at the 2013 Agricultural Outlook Forum



If anyone knows about being an intern turned full-time employee, it’s Candice Harvey.

Candice C. Harvey was GIPSA’s 1890 National Scholar from 2009-2013 and interned in the Head Quarters, Western Regional Office, and Eastern Regional Office, respectively. In addition, she served as the diversity student delegate to the 2013 Agricultural Outlook Forum from Fort Valley State University. However, in just exactly one year, Ms. Harvey transformed from student participant to a Program Analyst for Packers, and Outlook Forum planning committee member. Perhaps the biggest transition in this story is how Candice was a student participant to last year’s forum and a presenter for the 2014 Agricultural Outlook Forum, February 20-21, 2014, in Crystal City, Virginia.

Using the knowledge she acquired over her duration as the agency’s intern, Candice transformed her experience into a session inaugural in design to the Forum, which she also chaired design and implementation for : @USDA: Tweet, Meet, and Succeed. As one of two presenters for this high energy and informative session, Candice used her love for music and tips for success to create what she called, “The Internship Playlist”. Session participants learned the do’s and don’ts of how to transform internships into careers while jamming to the sounds of artists like The Beatles, Robin Thicke, Michael Jackson, and even The Lion King! The session also shed light on how USDA is using and can use social media to promote the great work we do here every day! Participants were fully engaged with the session by “tweeting” their questions for the presenters and watching via computer and phone.

The session received great praise for design, creativity, and information provided. Truly, this is just one testament to “The Changing Face of Agriculture” which is on Secretary Vilsack’s to do list and served as the theme for this year’s forum. Congrats Candice!

FGIS Matters....!

Randall Jones, Washington, DC

GIPSA wants to be the best place to work in USDA and the Federal government. That is our goal and, with your input and support, together we can make this happen. In the past month you have received many messages regarding our renewed effort to fully engage all GIPSA team members so that we can be the very best. A primary tool that we will use to gauge our success is the **Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS)** which measures employees' perceptions of whether, and to what extent, conditions that characterize successful organizations are present in their agencies. This survey was administered for the first time in 2002 and then repeated in 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, and most recently in late April through June of 2013. Detailed information can be found at <http://www.fedview.opm.gov/2013/>.



We anticipate that the FEVS will be conducted again this coming April so we do not have much time if we are to make a meaningful difference that will be measured in this survey. We have two primary goals with the first being to increase our participation rate in the survey. In the 2013 survey approximately 61 percent of GIPSA staff that were asked to complete the survey actually completed the survey. Our goal is to increase the response rate to 70 percent which I believe can be achieved and substantially surpassed.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) administers the survey and selects the agency staff that will be asked to complete the survey. In years past, all GIPSA employees were provided the opportunity to complete the survey however last year OPM used statistical sampling to select a subset of GIPSA staff to estimate the characteristics of the whole GIPSA staff. For the staff that will receive an e-mail invitation from OPM to complete the upcoming survey, we will provide sufficient time within the regularly schedule duty hours to complete the survey. We want to remove all barriers that might deter from participation and I welcome any suggestions that you may have as to how we can encourage everyone to respond to the survey. I sincerely believe that we can achieve a response rate approaching 100 percent.

Gaining input from GIPSA staff is but the first step. The second short term goal was the creation of **Action Teams** with in all **Field Offices**, the **National Grain Center** and **Washington DC Headquarters**. By the time this newsletter goes to print, the **Action Teams** will be in place. I am convinced that the **Action Teams** are the key to our success as an organization in meeting our goals and creating a high performing organization. The **GIPSA management team** is fully committed to supporting the **Action Teams** and the recommendations that come forward. This is your opportunity to play a substantial role in molding our agency and making it the best it can be. Please don't be shy about voicing your opinion by providing suggestions to the **Action Teams** or by sending them directly to me at Randall.D.Jones@usda.gov.

Providing Great Customer Service. On February 26, we had the pleasure of meeting with representatives of the **USA Rice Federation** and discussed a number of issues with an emphasis on taking official samples and the issuance of phytosanitary certificates by APHIS. **Dr. Dave Funk, Chief Scientist**, traveled to Washington DC and delivered a fascinating demonstration to the group of the technology that FGIS has developed to measure broken kernels of rice. The **USA Rice Federation** were certainly impressed by the demonstration and the new technology and eagerly volunteered their facilities to be utilized in the beta tests that will start in the next couple of months. The creation and development of this new technology was made possible by the contributions of many staff with **Dr. Zoltan Gillay**, visiting scientist, leading the way, with lots of support from **Rick Millerd**, Board of Appeals and Review, **Jason Jordan**, TSD, and **Beverly Whalen**, FMD, and many others too numerous to mention.

The **USA Rice Federation** members represent some of our largest rice stakeholders in the country and each and every one of them praised FGIS staff on the service that we provide. Specifically compliments were paid to **Sandra Metheny**,

Continued, see FGIS on page 13.

News from National Grain Center



Black History Month at NGC Kansas City Visit from Regional Administrator of SBA Valerie Collins, SEPM

NGC celebrated Black history month, by hosting the Region VII Administrator for the Small Business Administration, Ms. Patricia Brown-Dixon. Ms. Brown-Dixon, spent 25 years, working for GSA with small business, and then became the Director of the Heartland Office of Small Business Utilization. Brown-Dixon has spent her career working alongside the small businesses in the four-state region, as well as across the country. She serves as the Chairperson of the Small Business Committee of the Greater Kansas City Federal Executive Board. She has won numerous awards for small business advocacy, including the SBA Kansas City District Office's 1995 Minority Business Advocate of the Year award. In 2007, she received the Excellence in Partnership Award from the Coalition of Government Procurement, and in 2009, she was named Advocate of the Year by the Greater Kansas City Minority Enterprise Development Week Committee. Just recently she was selected as a 2011 Woman of Influence by the Kansas City Business Magazine. She was selected and appointed By President Obama in 2011 to the Regional Administrator position.

The theme chosen for the celebration was "50 Years after the Dream. The afternoon started out with the original television footage of Dr. King at the Mall during the march on Washington. An excerpt of his I have a Dream speech was shown in the old black and white film. Ms. Brown-Dixon followed the speech. Ms. Brown-Dixon was a great speaker and kept the audience attention, even after a wonderful, African/ soul food lunch. After her presentation Dr. Funk, took her on a tour of the facilities. She responded with a letter of appreciation and noted that "She had no idea that any Federal agency was protecting us in so many ways". Before her arrival she had no idea of what NGC was about. Ms. Brown-Dixon came to us, by invitation from one of our own, Physical Scientist, April Johnson, who happens to be her cousin. Thank you April, and the fine cooks at NGC.



GEAPS Exchange Pat McCluskey, NGC

GIPSA sent four representatives to the Grain Elevator and Processing Society (GEAPS) Exchange 2014, held in Omaha, Nebraska, February 23-25, 2014. The GEAPS Exchange is the grain handling industry's largest venue for operations professionals and suppliers to connect. Almost 400 companies exhibited in a 200,000 square foot exhibit hall at Expo 2014, at which exhibitors displayed innovative solutions to industry needs. GIPSA demonstrated the Test Weight Trainer, developed by the Technology and Science Division. Additionally GIPSA staff explained the role of the official weighing and inspection system to booth visitors, and exhibited training materials.

In the photo:

Left to Right: Cathleen Brenner, Tim Norden, Rob Dorman, Jason Jordan

Field Location Sound-Off

P&SP Midwestern Regional Office



Back Row: Gregory Andrews, Dr. Simon Estes, Stuart Frank, Will Arce, Bruce Gardner
Front Row: La Dondra Taylor, Katie Stout, Jeani Plautz, Kristen Pirtle, Kevin Studer

Black History month Event

By: La Dondra Taylor, Des Moines, Iowa

On February 12, 2014 P&SP Midwestern Regional Office employees attended a Black History Month Program sponsored by the local APHIS Civil Rights and Diversity Advisory Committee. The event featured Undersecretary Avalos and Dr. Simon Estes.

Undersecretary Avalos started the program by commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by President Lyndon B. Johnson which took place on July 2, 1964. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed major forms of discrimination against racial, ethnic, national and religious minorities, and women. The Undersecretary spoke of the adversities he encountered being Native- American of not being allowed to use certain barbershops and seating in certain sections in the movie theater. Before introducing the guest speaker, the Undersecretary opened with the phrase his grandmother told him as a young boy, “You have the power to be what YOU want to be, not what others say you are.”

Dr. Simon Estes was born March 2, 1938, in Centerville, Iowa. He attributes his success on a solid foundation of faith, education, and the ability to forgive if somebody mistreated him. His grandfather was a former slave and his father did not know how to read or write. However, Dr. Estes parents infused in him the importance to love all people no matter their color and return evil to no one. He recounted what his father told him “You’ve got to get an education son, that’s one thing they can’t take from you.”

Dr. Estes attended the University of Iowa and auditioned for the University of Iowa chorus in 1957. The head of the vocal department told him he didn’t have any talent. At the time, there were no black students in the choir. A newly hired vocal teacher thought otherwise. He gave Dr. Estes vocal training at no charge but requested that if he became famous that he would return the favor to others. Dr. Estes did just so. In 1964, he auditioned and was accepted at the Juilliard School in New York City. From that point onward, his music career flourished. Dr. Estes is a renowned opera singer who has sung at most of the world’s major opera houses as well as in front of President Obama, Clinton, Nixon and Nelson Mandela. Dr. Estes has used his voice as a stepping stone to help others as well. He started the Simon Estes Foundation to help students pay for college expenses and humanitarian work around the world. Dr. Estes is currently raising millions of dollars to provide millions of children, under the age of five, in Africa treated bed nets to prevent the deadly disease of Malaria that is spread by mosquitos.

New Orleans Field Office

Food Drive 2013

GIPSA employees in the New Orleans Field Office (NOFO and Areas 1, 2, and 3) held our annual activity for charity – the 2013 Thanksgiving Food Drive. NOFO employees donated over 1,400 pounds of food items to The Second Harvest Food Bank. The food bank provides food items for individuals in the greater New Orleans area and Acadian parishes. This amount greatly exceeds our donations from all previous years. Everyone should be proud of this accomplishment. Thanks to all who gave generously and provided hope for the less fortunate. A special thanks to the employees who collected, boxed, and transported all of the food donations that were delivered to the food bank.



Are you a leader or a potential leader? GIPSA rolls out 2014 Leadership Program for Non-supervisors!

By Caroline Thorpe, Training Officer, GIPSA MBS



GIPSA will have a Leadership Development Program (LDP) in 2014 which will be open to all non-supervisory employees ranging in grade level from GS 4 to 13. In acknowledgement of the high retirement eligibility rate within the agency for existing supervisors and managers, GIPSA continues to make succession planning a priority. The goal of the LDP is to get potential leaders ready educationally and experimentally for future challenges and opportunities. This will foster development to allow employees to step up to the plate as new opportunities arise. As such, the agency will move forward with a series of leadership programs that are offered through the USA Grad School for grades 4-13.

Applications will be accepted only from those who are not supervisors or have not been in any graduate or leadership development programs in the previous three years (2013, 2012, or 2011). All applicants will be competitively selected by GIPSA before attending (DO

NOT USE THE INTERNET TO APPLY TO THESE PROGRAMS). See end of article for status of application process. There are specifically 3 programs that employees may apply for depending on grade level. Review information below:

- Executive Leadership Program for (GS 12-13): This consists of four one week sessions, a 60 day detail, shadowing assignment, team assignments, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and 360 survey. The program starts either May 4-9, 2014, or September 7-12, 2014.

http://www.graduateschool.edu/course_details.php?cid=ELPG9000L

- New Leader Program for (GS 7-11): This consists of three one week sessions, a 30 day detail, shadowing assignment, management interviews and book reviews. The program starts August 10-15, 2014.

http://graduateschool.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=211&Itemid=492

- Aspiring Leader Program for (GS 4-6): This consists of two one week sessions, shadowing assignment, management interviews and book reviews. The programs first session is starts either July 7-11, 2014 or October 6-10, 2014.

http://graduateschool.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=210

- Application Process

An e-mail will be released soon on how to apply to this program. If you have questions in the meantime please contact Caroline Thorpe, Training Officer at caroline.c.thorpe@usda.gov or call 202-690-2332.

PSP Change Control Working Group

Your Ideas Matter.... And Make Big Impacts Too!

Do you have a great idea to help improve the work of our agency or its processes (including PAS) or employee morale – but don't know what to do with it? Look no further than the CCWG Team and the change request program!

How does it work? First, any P&SP employee may create a Change Request and submit it to the CCWG. Instructions are provided on the inGIPSA employee website (PSP Essentials/Teams/CCWG). Second, the CCWG team reviews each Change Request and determines if expert opinions or cost proposals are needed. After deliberation and discussion, CCWG makes a recommendation to PMT and forwards the change request on to management for review. Third, the PMT reviews the Change Request and has the final decision to approve or disapprove. If approved, the Change Request then goes on to implementation with BEAD, PLD, or an assigned team/employee.

Often this process can be more complicated than outlined above. It truly takes a lot of group effort to ensure that Change Requests are reviewed and implemented to benefit the agency. Examples are the Change Requests submitted by Resident Agency Jason Corey and by a PLD team (Tim Hansen, Jeana Harbison, Ray Minks and Brett Offutt). Both Change Requests involved changes to the subpoena process including edits to WI-30 and the creation of a subpoena enforcement workflow. While the ECM workflow portions were denied due to budgetary reasons, the updates to the Work Instruction were approved. The changes to the Work Instruction will help employees understand the workflow of subpoenas and subpoena enforcements and will allow for cross-training in the agency. Amy Blechinger and Wayne Basford worked together on drafting subpoena templates before final approval was given by PMT. These Change Requests, while implemented together due to synergy, are an illustration of how one or two Change Requests can be joined together into a large project that will have a large impact on the work of the agency.

A Shout-Out Goes to...

"A loud shout out goes to Doug Lacefield for creating MBS' Internal Control Risk Assessment Worksheet into a PDF fill'able format."— Joanne Peterson

Shout out to the GIPSA Headquarters CFC Team (Jennifer S. Hill Amber McDonald–Lake, Amanda Tucker, Ana Alvarado, Amy Blechinger, Candice Harvey, Eli Salahuddin, Irene Omade, Jeana Harbison, and Robert Kayne) for their dedication during the campaign season which led to the Agency being recognized for donations exceeding \$125 per capita with in the National Capital Region. GIPSA was the only MRP agency to do so.

"A LOUD shout-out goes to those GIPSA employees who assisted me in FY 2013 and who are assisting me in FY 2014 to process Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. GIPSA's FOIA program would not have been successful without the help of everyone who searched for and located responsive documents; posted the documents to the shared drives; responded to my questions about program matters; and provided me research. My sincere gratitude to each of you" —Joanne Peterson, GIPSA FOIA Officer.

Let's give a shout out to Richard Aguilera, Grain Inspector, Toledo Field Office for making all of us proud to have him on our team! Check out the "Links of Interests" section for more details of Richard's dedication.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) – WEBINARS

Terri Henry and Caroline Thorpe, Washington, DC

In March 2014, GIPSA is focusing on the EAP and how to use these services to help keep you moving forward. Rebecka Jensen, a counselor at EAP will offer the following workshops:

Stress Management: Building Resiliency Webinar–For All Employees

When: Tuesday- March 18, 2014 from 1:00 pm-2:30 pm (Eastern) – Room 2430-S

This presentation identifies ways to develop resiliency to stressors, discuss why stress management is essential, and offer techniques and practical methods to use in situations that cause stress.



Register by clicking on the link below or cutting and pasting it into your internet browser.

https://aglearn.usda.gov/learning/user/deeplink_redirect.jsp?linkId=SCHEDULED_OFFERING_DETAILS&scheduleID=37602

Webinar instructions will be sent several days before the event.

Supervisor Orientation: A Supervisor's 24/7 Resource–Supervisors and Managers

When: Tuesday- March 25, 2014, from 1:00 pm-2:30 pm (Eastern)

Providing an overview of services, this presentation focuses on the nature of the EAP as a voluntary, confidential, and free benefit to employees. In addition, it underscores the EAP as a consultative resource and offers practical tips for dealing with employees when they are experiencing problems in the workplace.

Registration information will be sent to supervisors and managers in a separate e-mail.

EAP-EAP-EAP-EAP-EAP-EAP-EAP-EAP-EAP-EAP-EAP-EAP

Employee Assistance Program—Has a lot of other free services to help you address life's challenges.

Personal and family problems can diminish your health, your happiness, and your ability to be at your best for yourself and your family. With the help of your Employee Assistance Program (EAP), provided by Federal Occupational Health, you can resolve these problems and become happier, healthier, and even more effective at home and at work.

Convenient Access by Phone or on the Web

Employees need only call 800-222-0364 or (888) 262-7848 (TTY) from anywhere in the United States to receive immediate assistance, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You can also obtain information and resources online at FOH4You.com. At the <http://FOH4You.com> site, you will have easy access to educational materials, self-assessment tools, and specific information on available EAP services.

Counseling Services

Licensed or credentialed professional counselors provide face-to-face, short-term counseling to employees and family members. Counselors can also provide referrals to community resources based on client needs, health insurance coverage, and financial resources.

Financial and Legal Services

FGIS from page 7

Manager and the rest of the **Stuttgart Field Office staff** were cited as well as **Willy Washington**, Officer in Charge, Crowley, Louisiana, and staff. We are very proud of our staff and the work that each of you do on a daily basis. Our mission is to support the marketing of U.S. grain and commodities and when we here complements such as these received from **USA Rice Federation**, we can feel confident that we are meeting this mission.

Export Grain Market Update.

Grain exports continue to skyrocket and our export elevators are working hard to meet the needs of our international customers.

Grain exports year-to-date are up 43 percent compared to last year with soybeans leading the way at 34.4 million metric tons (plus 7.5 mmt), corn exports at 14.9 mmt (up 139 percent or plus 8.7 mmt) and wheat at 9.3 mmt (plus 1.4 mmt).

From what we hear from the exporters, the spring shipping season will continue to be strong.

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

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



EAP from page 12

FOH's EAP includes free consultation with financial experts and licensed attorneys to provide assistance with your legal and financial questions. Services include help with living will and health care power of attorney, housing or real estate matters, estate planning, education funding, retirement planning, and investment strategies.

Health and Wellness Presentations and EAP Orientations

We can make health and wellness presentations and EAP orientations support both supervisors and employees. The employee orientation sessions discuss the features and benefits of the EAP, how the EAP functions, and how to access and use the EAP. Health and wellness presentations include such topics as conflict resolution, substance abuse prevention, balancing work and life, time and stress management, and more.

Supervisor and Risk Management Consultation

EAP counselors provide guidance and consultation so that supervisors and managers can effectively identify, interact with, and refer employees with performance or conduct issues to the program. FOH counselors are available 24/7 to discuss performance concerns and the appropriate EAP intervention.

Critical Incident Response

Exposure to threats, acts of violence, natural disasters, injury, or death calls for immediate response. EAP's professionally trained critical incident stress management (CISM) counselors assist in management consultations.



Organization of Professional Employees
of the U. S. Department of Agriculture
(OPEDA)
in Partnership with USDA



We are now accepting
2014 Unsung Hero Award Nominations
for more information or to submit completed nominations please e-mail
OPEDA@dm.usda.gov

Completed nominations may also be hand-delivered to Room SM-3, 3rd Wing,
Sub-basement, USDA South Building or mailed to OPEDA, P.O. Box 23762,
Washington, D.C. 20026-3762, to reach the OPEDA Office ***no later than Monday,***
March 24, 2014. (202) 720-4898

2014 Unsung Hero Award Program
Thursday, May 8, 2014 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
Patio, Whitten Building
Luncheon Reception to Follow

President's Volunteer Service Award

The Secretary of Agriculture invites employees to submit nominations for the President's Volunteer Service Awards (PVSA).

Any individual, family or group that meets the program's criteria can receive Presidential recognition for volunteer hours served over a 12-month period or over the course of a lifetime. Criteria for recognition are:

- Recipients must be United States citizens or lawfully admitted permanent residents of the United States.
- Awards are issued for service hours served within a 12-month time period or over the course of a lifetime.
- Awards are issued for volunteer service only. Additional levels of participation with the organization, i.e. charitable support, are not a factor considered for the award.
- Court-ordered community service does not qualify for the award.

Awards are issued by approved [Certifying Organizations](#).

- Service must be with an organization that is legally established in the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or one of the territories.



For more information and application see the link below:

<http://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov/index.cfm>

Special Emphasis Corner



Employee Engagement: GIPSA Action Teams

Recently you received a message from the Administrator regarding the Agency's plan to make GIPSA a better place to work for all Team Members. The driving force behind this effort will be GIPSA staff. The Agency is forming Action Teams for each office that will allow Team Members to develop Action Plans that will be used in making GIPSA a better place to work.

The goal of GIPSA's employee engagement action teams is to assist in creating an environment that values and supports employee engagement, and promotes a healthy organization by developing internal programs and initiatives for GIPSA employees. This will assist their organizations in creating an active, two-way communication program, ensuring that everyone can add his or her voice to the dialogue.

Each regional office will have approximately 5 – 6 person action teams and (2) alternates, who will be randomly selected from the list of volunteers. The action teams will receive a one-day training and certification from the Civil Rights Office. The training and orientation will consist of small group facilitation, managing team dynamics, and problem solving technics. This will enable them to facilitate a two hour "Real Talk sessions". Participation in the sessions is voluntary for all employees.

Seven areas have been identified in surveys that will add in achieving sustainable employee engagement, the following seven areas are:

- (1) Role clarity
- (2) Career management
- (3) Performance management
- (4) Networking
- (5) Rewards
- (6) Work environment
- (7) Values

The key to GIPSA ultimately reaching its maximum potential as an organization is through true employee engagement and ensuring everyone takes ownership in the outcome of the organization's success and failure.

Training Updates

Caroline Thorpe, Washington, DC

Mandatory Training Due

Course	Due Date	Trainees
No Fear Act Comprehensive	Within 30 days of hiring (USDA)	New Employees
Cultural Transformation Training	Upcoming	All Employees
Calendar Year 2014 Ethics	Due Date June 30, 2014	All Employees
Reasonable Accommodations	Due March 28, 2014	All Supervisors and managers (50 percent are complete)

Optional Training Available

EAP Resilience and Stress	March 18, 2014 - From 1-2:30 pm	All Employees (See Article page 12)
EAP – Supervisory Resources	March 25, 2014 -From 1-2:30 pm	All Employees (See Article page 12)

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 coachee 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.

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.

Continued, see Training on page 15

Training from cover page 14

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.

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



Have an idea?



Then fill out your change request
available at *inGIPSA* and email it to:
FGIS-CCWG@usda.gov

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

USDA, GIPSA, Stop 3620
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-3649
Phone (202) 690-3929
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Jennifer.s.hill@usda.gov



By March 21, 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.

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