



GIPSA NEWS

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

MAY 2014
2014

Updates From Management and Budget Services

Marianne Plaus, Washington, DC

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GIPSA's Management and Budget Services Division oversees and coordinates more than 14 functions that contain numerous subcomponents. With that in mind, and with over half the fiscal year over, we have much we would like to share with you. Here are a few of the highlights:

Budget, Training, and Awards

GIPSA's Administrator approved revised allocations on April 3, 2014. These allocations provide not only for our mission-critical programs and support services, but also for several initiatives focused on training and employee recognition. Regarding training, GIPSA will be supporting 18 employees who applied and were competitively-selected, to participate in several of the leadership development programs offered by the USA Grad School. For details, see the article in this newsletter on the selected participants and the programs. Additionally, GIPSA has set aside funding to support a blended learning curriculum of webinars and online training that will be geared toward strengthening the skills of existing supervisors. Areas of focus will include providing performance feedback, misconduct, and developing employees. In the coming months, GIPSA's Training Officer, Caroline Thorpe, will develop and set up the webinars and provide guidance information to all supervisors and managers.



Marianne Plaus

Regarding awards, the Office of Personal Management and the Office of Management and Budget rescinded the moratorium on cash awards for fiscal year 2014. However, they are still maintaining very tight limits on the amount that each agency can spend on awards. In consideration of these limits, GIPSA's Administrator has approved allocations for each office to spend on awards this fiscal year. The award allocations have been issued to the Executive Management Team and they have, or will soon, share this information with each of the offices under their purview.

Briefly, other budget items of note --- on April 2, GIPSA's Administrator joined the Under Secretary and the Administrators of the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to defend our fiscal year 2015 budget request before the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee. During the Hearing, Congressional support was voiced for GIPSA, and all questions were directed toward our sister agencies, especially APHIS.

Continued, see MBS on page 2.

MBS from cover page

In the May/June timeframe, GIPSA's Administrator will kick off internal discussion of our fiscal year 2016 budget request. Yes, it is that time already. It typically takes 18 to 24 months from the time we begin preparing a budget request to the time that an appropriations bill is approved and we actually receive an appropriation of funding.

Workforce Planning

Within five years, or by fiscal year 2019, 46 percent of GIPSA's workforce is eligible to retire, with some offices being impacted more severely than others. In an effort to develop succession strategies to mitigate this issue and to meet USDA's personnel management guidance, MBS is coordinating the development of a workforce plan. Lisa Fyall, MBS, is leading a multi-disciplinary team that is coordinating this effort for GIPSA. It is important to note, however, that work force planning is intended to be an interactive planning approach that allows all program managers to identify mission critical positions and GIPSA's competency, staffing, and succession issues. This approach, so far, has resulted in the development of workforce goals and strategies and an initial implementation action plan. The workforce plan is a living document, and this approach allows for continuous input and development. In other words, the plan will adjust as we meet action plan milestones or recognize new workforce challenges. Once we have a fully-developed plan, we will post it on InGIPSA for all to view.

Workers Compensation

Worker's Compensation has gone green! In an effort to speed up workers compensations claims being processed, the Federal Government has started using an all-electronic submission process call ECOMP (Employee Compensation Operation's & Management Portal) that allows an agency to get new cases immediately to the Department of Labor, allowing them to assign a claim number and begin processing the claims within a day or two instead of a week or more. ECOMP allows the filing of the CA-1 (for traumatic injury) or the CA-2 (for occupational disease), and after an official Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) claim number has been issued, employees can file the CA-7 (Claim for Compensation). Employees are not permitted currently to submit their own claims through the ECOMP; they still must report the injury to their local workers compensation official designated at their duty location. ECOMP also gives us the ability upload documents to active FECA cases. We can upload letters, medical reports and other supporting documentation.

GIPSA also participates in a workers' compensation benefits program called "First Script." First Script is a benefit management system designed exclusively for workers' compensation. It is a voluntary program that represents a new benefit for injured workers by providing them with a more efficient way to obtain prescriptions, durable medical equipment (DME) and medical imaging for their work-related injuries.

Continued, see MBS on page 7



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.

Names in the News

Retirements



Byron School will retire from his position as an Industrial Specialist with the Policies, Procedures, and Market Analysis Branch with 30 years of federal service. He began his career in grain inspection in July of 1976 at the New Orleans Field Office as a sampler/grain inspector and later was assigned the position of Weights Supervisor in the Destrehan field office. In late 1979, Byron accepted a position in the DC headquarters office as a Weights Specialist for the Field Operations Staff and later transferred to the Weighing and Equipment Branch. Byron left FGIS in 1987 to take a position as the managing/director of the Bangkok, Thailand, office of Caleb Brett inspection services company. In 1989 Byron left Caleb Brett and accepted a position with USAID's Office of Khmer affairs in Bangkok, Thailand, and stayed until the project closed in 1994. In 1995 he accepted a position with the GIPSA Packers and Stockyard Administration in the Lancaster, PA regional office as the Industrial Specialist and in 1996 he was assigned a position in the Weighing

Office of the Packers and Stockyard Administration in Washington DC. In 1998 Byron returned to the FGIS Weighing and Equipment Branch as an Industrial Specialist to manage the Master Scale program. Byron says he looks forward to going back to Thailand with his family every 2 or 3 years and not worrying about railcars anymore.

Anita Heckenbach will retire on May 3, 2014, with almost 31 years of service from her position as a Grain Marketing Specialist with the Quality Assurance and Compliance Division. Anita graduated from Central Missouri State University in 1980 with degrees in Physics and Geology. She began her career as a Physical Science Technician with the Quality Control & Testing Branch – Protein section in 1983. She was promoted to Grain Marketing Specialist in 1988 with the Quality Survey Group. In 1993, Anita transferred to the Board of Appeals & Review and also served on a long-term detail to the Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) program. In 2000, Anita was promoted to Computer Specialist with the Information Technology Staff, where she initiated the National Quality Database. In 2006, she was reassigned to Field Management Division. In 2007, the Quality Assurance and Control Staff was created, which merged with the Compliance Division in 2010 to form the Quality Assurance and Compliance Division. Since 2007, Anita served as the project manager of the Quality Assurance and Control (QAC) module of FGISonline. In her retirement, Anita plans to read, work on her family tree and enjoy the outdoors.



Roger E. Schneider, Senior Economist and Acting Director of the Business and Economic Analysis Division, P&SP, GIPSA will be retiring May 2, 2014. Schneider served as an Economist with P&SP for 34 1/2 years, plus 2 years U.S Army. Graduate study at Universities of Illinois (MS) and Missouri (PhD), followed by a 2-year stint at the University of Illinois from 1977-1979 helping coordinate a project concerned with predicting the future of Illinois Agriculture for the 1980's. Primary responsibilities at P&SP have included staff analyses and reports for both internal and external use including reports to Congress, and agency performance analysis. Previously was heavily involved in management of P&SP's program of cooperative agreements with external researchers, including the 1996 study of Concentration in the Red Meat Packing Industry and the 2006 Congressionally-mandated study of marketing arrangements in the Livestock and Meat Industry. Recipient of numerous merit awards over the years; chosen as 2004 USDA Economist of the Year by the USDA Economists Club, an association of USDA economists and agricultural economists. Also a member of the team that received the 2008 Secretary's Group Honor Award for Excellence for work on a Business Process Reengineering Initiative to streamline P&SP's operations.

But in spite of living and working in DC area for nearly 35 years, still just an Illinois farm boy at heart.

Names in the News continued...

New Hires

Robert Arnhold (RA) joined the FGIS team April 6th as a Supervisor in Portland Oregon. Arnhold started with the Washington State Department of Agriculture in 1978 and has filled many roles there including: Agricultural Commodities Grader, Supervisor, QAS, Scale Specialist, Equipment Specialist and Acting Regional Manager.



Kayla Burke-Chacko has been selected as the management analyst in the Office of the Deputy Administrator, Packers and Stockyards Program. Until last November, Kayla served as an Administration Specialist with the United States Marine Corps stationed in Quantico, Virginia. As a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps Kayla, brings a special set of skills to GIPSA.

Samantha Simon has been selected as the FGIS Quality Assurance and Compliance Division Director.



Since October 2011, Samantha has served as the Branch Chief for the Office of Compliance Assistance within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Biotechnology Regulatory Services, Regulatory Operations Programs. As the Branch Chief, Samantha oversees the development, implementation, and management of a variety of compliance assistance services and tools designed to facilitate compliance with APHIS-BRS regulations.

From January 2004 until October 2011, Samantha served as a program manager for the USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, Livestock and Seed Program, Audit, Review, and Compliance Branch. She was responsible for developing and implementing new audit and accreditation programs that facilitated the marketing of agricultural products domestically and internationally. In addition, she served as the Branch quality manager, for which she was responsible for developing, implementing, and maintaining recognition as an accreditation body by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. From January 1997 until January 2004, Samantha held a variety of other positions within the AMS Livestock and Seed Program including meat grader, market news reporter, and auditor.

Samantha has served on a number of collaborative projects within USDA including the AC 21 Stewardship and Outreach Working Group, the Organic Working Group, and the Consultative Group to Eliminate the Use of Child Labor and Forced Labor in Imported Agricultural Products.

Samantha is from Iowa and earned a Bachelor of Science Degrees in Animal Science and Agricultural Business at Iowa State University. She is an ISO 9001 lead auditor. She currently resides in Virginia with her husband, son, daughter, and step-daughter.

**MAKE
YOUR
VOICE
HEARD**

Look for the
2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey
the week of May 5, 2014!!

FEVS

Names in the News continued...

New Positions



Tony Goodman has been selected as the Deputy Director of Field Management Division. Tony began his career with FGIS in 2003 as a part time Agricultural Commodity Aid in the Toledo Field Office. Tony was eventually hired on as an Agricultural Commodity Grader and worked in the Toledo Field Office's expansive territory grading domestic and export shipments of grain and edible beans in the U.S. as well as shipments of U.S. grain exported through Canadian elevators.

Tony left FGIS in 2007 to work as an Export Manager for an Official Agency participating in the FGIS Contracting Pilot Program. At the conclusion of the pilot program in 2009, Tony returned to FGIS and became a shift supervisor while participating in the 2010 GIPSA Leadership Development Program (LDP). In 2011 Tony accepted a position in Washington, DC as a Grain Marketing Specialist in Field Management Division's Policies, Procedures, and Market Analysis Branch, where he has been able to utilize his first hand field experience to help formulate policy for the grain inspection program.

Alan Wadyko has been selected to fill the League City Field Office's Vacant Assistant Field Office Manager position. Alan started his career with the Denver Grain Exchange in 1973 as a sampler. He accepted a job with FGIS in August of 1977 as an Agricultural Commodity Grader in the Houston Field Office. Alan became a shift supervisor in the League City Field Office back in January of 2010.



Kendra Kline has been selected as the Assistant to the Deputy Administrator for FGIS. Since May 2013, Kendra has served as the Quality Assurance Specialist for the Toledo Field Office playing a key role in the management and operations of the field office. As the QAS, she proctored tests for aspiring grain inspectors, trained new inspectors, and was primarily responsible for the Quality Assurance Program. Kendra also served as the safety officer for the field office.

Kendra graduated from the University of Toledo in 2007 with a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and in 2008 graduated with her master's degree. She joined FGIS as a technician in the Toledo Field Office and soon thereafter was accepted into the intern program that provided the opportunity for her to become an agricultural commodity grader. During her time in Toledo, Kendra has gained a vast amount of experience related to many FGIS services such as the certification and issuance of certificates, customer billing, records management as well as inspecting grain loaded on ships in Canada and other duty points throughout the Toledo Field Office circuit.

30 years of Service

GIPSA's Civil Rights Staff Director **Kevin Smith** Celebrates 30 years of Service with the Federal Government.



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.

You have heard me say this before and I keep repeating it because I truly believe it and I am passionate about doing everything within my power to help make it happen. However, this is something that cannot be accomplished alone but will require the teamwork of all.



With that said, the **Employee Viewpoint Survey** will be e-mailed on May 5 to approximately ¼ of all GIPSA employees who are selected randomly to participate in the survey. I anticipate that those who receive the invitation to participate in the survey will have 5 weeks to complete it. More detailed information regarding the FEVS can be found at www.fedview.opm.gov. Managers and supervisors value your feedback and will ensure that you have sufficient time during official business hours to complete the survey. We want everyone to enjoy the GIPSA work environment and when employees fill out the survey it helps the management team understand better what can be done to achieve this goal.

Speaking of goals ... our goal is to have a 100 percent completion rate! So, if you receive a survey, do you part and complete it. Let your voice be heard and make a difference. Your contribution will be appreciated by all.

Again, looking forward, Public Service Recognition Week is May 4 -10. I would like to take the time to thank all of FGIS employees for the work that you do. As a “service” agency, we are judged by the services that we provide and each and every day GIPSA staff delivers.

In May, the management team will be participating in the annual American Association of Grain Inspection and Weighing Agencies’ (AAGIWA) meeting. AAGIWA is the professional organization that represents the vast majority of the Official Agencies who provide domestic official inspection and weighing services on behalf of FGIS. The FGIS managers will be discussing various important and relevant topics including fall protection, update on moisture meters, and quality initiatives.

We welcome our new **Quality Assurance and Compliance Division Director Samantha Simon** who joined us April 28. One of the first tasks facing Samantha will be to engage the QACD staff and identify needed skills which will allow us to fill a number of vacant positions that were created due to retirements. Samantha and the QACD Team, working with all Divisions, will conduct a complete review of our quality assurance program and develop a plan as to how we can ensure that our program consistently hits the “quality mark.” Quality is the most important building block and critical component of FGIS. Quality insures confidence in the grain export system and our stakeholders depend on us, each and every day to provide consistent, high quality and cost effective services.

Last month a new directive was released regarding the National Falling Number Quality Assurance Program which detailed the use of check test samples and a monitoring program. The **Technical and Science Division** will analyze a sample from each service point that conducts aflatoxin tests and will provide feedback regarding

Continued, see FGIS on page 8.

MBS *from page 2*

First Script provides a nationwide network of over 67,000 pharmacies including major chains and 97 percent of local independent pharmacies, a mail order program, and access to over 6,000 DME and medical imaging providers. Using First Script is as easy as “1-2-3.” An injured employee need only to take a prescription and the First Script Temporary Workers’ Compensation Benefit Card for Traumatic Injury (CA-1) that the employee receives from his/her supervisor to a retail pharmacy in First Script’s network and get the prescription filled. There are no out of pocket costs for the injured worker for the first prescription filled. First Script will pay the pharmacy directly. If the claim is accepted by Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs (OWCP), First Script will bill the Department of Labor directly. If the claim is denied by OWCP, First Script will cover 100 percent of the cost. Similarly, if an employee experiences a traumatic injury and a doctor provides them with a prescription for durable medical equipment and/or medical imaging tests, they simply call the 24/7/365 customer service desk at (888) 232-0791. There are no out of pocket expenses to the injured worker and the Department of Labor is billed directly for approved claims, and First Script absorbs the cost if the claim is not approved.

Internal Controls

USDA agencies and staff offices are required to establish an ongoing process to evaluate their controls, which includes identifying all organizational function components (referred to as Assessable Functions); assessing the risk of the assessable functions and assigning each functions a priority rating (High, Medium, Low); modifying controls, as needed; and scheduling internal control evaluations. GIPSA senior management has identified their programs’ Assessable Functions; and managers and supervisors have identified employees who are responsible for the assessable functions. In addition, GIPSA managers have selected points of contact (POCs) from their respective offices to assist in the implementation of GIPSA’s internal control program. The POCs are working with the program offices, staffs, and regional offices to initiate the next step in the internal control program—the risk assessment process.

Issuance Report

Terri Henry, Washington, DC

Organization, Delegations of Authority, and Assignment of Functions Handbook, dated April 2014.

FGIS Directive 9180.59, Composite Sample Analysis for Combined Land Carrier Inspections, dated April 8, 2014.

FGIS Program Notice 14-02, “Charm Sciences ROSA WET XR Aflatoxin Quantitative Test Method, dated April 22, 2014.

FGIS Program Notice 14-03, “EnviroLogix QuickTox for QuickScan Aflatoxin Free Quantitative Test Kit, dated April 22, 2014.

FGIS Directive 9180-84, “National Falling Number (FN) Quality Assurance Program, dated April 23, 2014.

FGIS Program Notice 14-09, “Revision of the Wheat Chapter of Grain Inspection Handbook II” dated April 24, 2014.

FGIS *from page 6*

their performance. This program will help validate and improve our accuracy for falling number testing.

Many of you may have noticed the increased moisture monitoring that has been taking place the last few weeks. We appreciate everyone's help in these various projects which have allowed us to address some concerns expressed by domestic and export grain handlers. Again, thanks.

Export Grain Market Update.

Grain exports continue to skyrocket and our export elevators as well as all of the FGIS team that supports grain inspection are working hard to meet the needs of our domestic and international customers.

Grain exports year-to-date are up 47 percent compared to last year with soybeans leading the way at 41.1 million metric tons (plus 7.4 mmt), corn exports at 26.8 mmt (up 123 percent or plus 14.8 mmt) and wheat at 27.8 mmt (plus 4.0 mmt).

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

Assignment in China By Vernett Knight Jr., NGC



As of March 28th I went on my first overseas international detail; also my first time traveling to another country. I arrived in China on March 29, 2014, which was a transition because of the time change. China is 13 hours ahead of US Central time Zone.

While in China there were a few things that were on my bucket list. Fortunately, I had the chance to try a few things that I didn't think to have on that list. I was glad I had the opportunity to try and experience them. One of the must do things was to compare American-Chinese food and Chinese-Chinese food. The food here in the states I found is more meat and chicken base while in China the dishes are more vegetable based with the usage of chilies and peppers to bring heat to the food instead of ground spices. Also the meals there were lighter; not as heavy on the stomach; unlike in the U.S. where we use many different kinds of sauces or gravy. Other foods I got to try were the soups, tofu, different types of noodles, and different kinds of teas. Much like here in the states would offer a guest a drink or cold water the Chinese always offered a drink but instead of a cold water or drink it was a cup of piping hot water.

Some of the other things that were different from what Americans do in the states is that the Chinese have a two hour lunch break where they will eat, take a nap or even play games. One of the games they played in their main office building was like a form of the game hacky-sack like we have in the states but the ball was different. The ball was more like the birdie for badminton but with a longer tail and was made with feathers.

While in China there was one holiday on April 5th- 6th and one of the employees explained what the day was about. It was to honor families members that have passed away. Much like myself asking different question about the country of China and the people that live there many of the Chinese asked me about where I was from and different things about America like food, our families, government, lifestyles, and about the country side of the country.

From this trip I have learned that the best way to learn and experience another country is to dive in both feet first and get hands- on experience.

I would finish with thanking everyone that helped to make this an enjoyable experience that I will never forget.

News from National Grain Center



SENASICA-APHIS SOIL CONTAMINATION TECHNICAL EXCHANGE
NATIONAL GRAIN CENTER - KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
MARCH 28, 2014

SENASICA NGC Visit

On March 27, a Mexican governmental team comprised of: Armando Cesar Lopez, Director of Inspection at Ports, Airports and Frontiers, SENASICA-DGIF, Rosalinda Flores, Sub director of Inspection at Borders and Frontiers, SENASICA-DGIF, and Juan Jose Flores, Sub director of National Regulation, SENASICA-DGSV visited the National Grain Center. The team was traveling with members of FGIS and APHIS, as part of a fact finding mission due to stoppages of U.S. exports by SENASICA. The group received a tour of the National Grain Center. They got to see the pesticide residue, protein, mycotoxin, and moisture labs. The delegation then met with Brian Adam, head of the Board of Appeals and Review. Brian talked about all the processes involved in the quality control aspect of FGIS, from equipment calibration to checking random samples of inspected grain.

Ramon Luevano and Fred Felix of the Board of Appeals and Review, helped demonstrate a step-by-step process of breaking down a corn sample all the way to determining the grade on it. The group claimed that they found the visits over the past two days very helpful in understanding the grain system, especially the inspection process. March 28 was a meeting between the two governments and industry at NGC. NAEGA, Cargill, Gavillon, ADM, Bartlett, and KC Southern railway all had representatives there. The Mexican team gave a presentation over their organization, inspection, and data.

Links of Interest

MRP Telework Webinar

In preparation for the April 30, GIPSA Town Hall meeting, Dexter Thomas requested input from staff about topics of interest, with telework coming up numerous times. The Administrator decided that a separate webinar should take place before the Town Hall meeting to discuss the updated Departmental Regulation on the Telework Program and to answer questions that were submitted to include: Telework Week, eligibility, position ineligibility, employee ineligibility, participation types and required documentation, telework agreements, employee responsibilities, closures and delayed arrivals, credit hours, comp time, and overtime.

The webinar took place April 24, 2014; a recording of the webinar can be found here: <http://www.screencast.com/t/0D6wWT3Oy>

Worklife Wellness Monthly Newsletter

The Worklife Wellness Monthly Newsletter can be found on the InGIPSA site under “Safety and Health” in the “Employee Resources” tab.

Travel Bits and Pieces

Rose Alexander

Submission of Travel Vouchers - It is important that all documents in GovTrip are processed timely since they will not be supported in Concur Government Edition (CGE) during or after the transition. The Agriculture Travel Regulations state that employees must submit travel vouchers within 5 working days after the trip is completed. Travelers in continuous travel status must submit a voucher, at a minimum, every two weeks. For local travel (per diem and/or mileage only), employees must submit a voucher or SF-1164 within 5 days working days after every quarter.

Public Service Recognition Week

May 4-10, 2014

"Proud to Serve"

A Shout-Out Goes to...

"Shout out" to Rodney Bell and the GSL for providing the grains for the GIPSA "Take your child to work day" activity. The children will be placing the different grains and edible beans in plastic canisters to create "grain art".—Andy Greenfield

Thankful shout-out to Jeana Harbison for coordinating the PSP headquarters employee luncheon with the managers and to Donna Ash and Stephanie Feinberg for bringing in water and snacks for the April 22-24 PSP managers meeting! - Amy Blechinger

Big shout-out to the GIPSA IT staff for their sustained efforts to complete the operating system upgrade from Windows XP to Windows 7 and concurrent upgrade of the Microsoft Office Suite to the latest 2013 version! - Amy Blechinger

Celebratory and grateful shout-out to all the administrative professionals that faithfully serve GIPSA's field and headquarters offices answering phones, auditing our time sheets, maintaining the managers' calendars, preparing and mailing correspondence, and more, ensuring that the offices continue to run smoothly. We couldn't fulfill our mission nearly as effectively without you, so thank you! - Amy Blechinger

"A huge shout out to Nancy Speer, Senior Auditor, WRO, for graciously serving as the Acting Financial Unit Supervisor when the position was vacant due to a retirement. Nancy did a great job of steering the ship and keep everything moving forward. I really appreciate it!" - Kraig Roesch

A roaring SHOUT OUT goes to all GIPSA employees who completed the internal control risk assessment worksheets for their assigned functions. —Joanne Peterson

Call for Nominations

66th Annual Secretary's Honor Awards

“Meeting the Challenges With New Opportunities”



The Secretary of Agriculture invites agencies to submit nominations for the 66th Annual Secretary's Honor Awards. These are the most prestigious awards presented by the Department of Agriculture (USDA), recognizing noteworthy accomplishments that significantly contribute to the advancement of USDA's strategic goals, mission objectives, and overall management excellence. Employees at all grade levels are eligible for recognition.

The award categories for 2014 are:

- 1) Secretary's Honor Award for Enhancing the Economic Vitality and Quality of Life in Rural America
- 2) Secretary's Honor Award for Protecting Natural Resources
- 3) Secretary's Honor Award for Increasing Global Food Security
- 4) Secretary's Honor Award for Ensuring Access to Safe and Nutritious Food
- 5) Secretary's Honor Award for Management Excellence
- 6) Secretary's Honor Award for Personal and Professional Excellence
- 7) Secretary's Honor Award for Support Service
- 8) Secretary's Honor Award for Heroism and Emergency Response
- 9) Secretary's Honor Award for Diversity, Inclusion and Outreach
- 10) Secretary's Honor Award for Labor-Management Collaboration
- 11) Secretary's Honor Award for Innovative Customer Service
- 12) Secretary's Honor Award for External Partnership

Category 12 is new this year, and should be used for all individual and group nominations of solely external partners (e.g., universities and conservation organizations). Each Under Secretary may submit one nomination in this category, in addition to the nominations from the respective agencies in the other eleven categories.

The Secretary's Honor Awards Nomination Form AD-495, recently update, can be found here <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/policy-directivesrecords-forms/forms-management/approved-computer-generated-forms> or request a copy from Amanda Tucker.

Nominations are Due to Amanda Tucker by June 6, 2014.

The Honors Awards Ceremony is Scheduled for Fall of 2014.

Special Emphasis Corner

E-Scrap for Earth Day



For Earth Day 2014 GIPSA Employees at the National Grain Center participated in an E scrap program sponsored by EPA Region 7, Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), the Unified Government of Wyandotte County-Kansas City, Kansas, and UNICOR Federal Prison Industries. E Scrap provided employees with an opportunity to, with out any costs, recycle their personal electronics including Computers, Compute Monitors, Peripherals, Personal Copiers, DVD Players, Cell Phones, Telephones, Stereos, Radios, etc..

UNICOR (Federal Prison Industries, Inc.) will test equipment for reuse. All hard drives will be wiped with Department of Defense approved software. Monitors will be evaluated for reuse, recycling into color TVs, or sent to a glass recycling facility; electronics that cannot be reused will be de-manufactured and sold for their commodity value.

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



Special Emphasis Corner *continued*

About Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month



May is Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month – a celebration of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. A rather broad term, Asian-Pacific encompasses all of the Asian continent and the Pacific islands of Melanesia (New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomon Islands), Micronesia (Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru and the Federated States of Micronesia) and Polynesia (New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia and Easter Island).

Like most commemorative months, Asian-Pacific Heritage Month originated in a congressional bill. In June 1977, Reps. Frank Horton of New York and Norman Y. Mineta of California introduced a House resolution that called upon the president to proclaim the first ten days of May as Asian-Pacific Heritage Week. The following month, senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga introduced a similar bill in the Senate. Both were passed. On October 5, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed a Joint Resolution designating the annual celebration. Twelve years later, President George H.W. Bush signed an extension making the week-long celebration into a month-long celebration. In 1992, the official designation of May as Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month was signed into law.

The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.

The theme for Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month May 2014: “Diverse Leadership and Expanding Opportunity: An Imperative for America.”

Source: <http://asianpacificheritage.gov/collections.html>

Cinco de Mayo

Cinco de Mayo celebrates the legendary Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862, in which a Mexican force of 4,500 men faced 6,000 well-trained French soldiers. The battle lasted four hours and ended in a victory for the Mexican army under Gen. Ignacio Zaragoza. Along with Mexican Independence Day on Sept. 16, Cinco de Mayo has become a time to celebrate Mexican heritage and culture.

A special Happy Cinco de Mayo to all GIPSA employees of Mexican descent!!!



IT UPDATES

New PC Imaging and Deployment

This year the Information Technology Staff was challenged with two initiatives, replace old assets and replace all Windows XP computers. Effective April 8, 2014, Microsoft retired support for Windows XP. Therefore, it was imperative to have the new assets imaged and deployed prior to the April 8th deadline.

In order to meet the two initiatives mentioned above, the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) allocates funding for 25 percent computer replacement every year. The Information Technology Staff ordered 237 new computers to replace older equipment. GIPSA previously had computer equipment that spanned from 4 to 7 years old.

The roll out would have been slow since we would have required time to develop, test, tweak, and retest another image for the new hardware. To expedite, new machine roll out, we contracted with ITS to manage our Windows 7 Image. They have developed and maintain the Windows 7 image that has been loaded on to the new models.

Even with ITS helping with the image development and management. GIPSA IT was falling behind on imaging and deployment. We had multiple projects on hand, along with our user community to support. So to get us on track the Network Telecommunications and Customer Support Branch, along with Daniel Knight and Ed Chi worked on Saturday, March 15, 2014, in an effort to meet the goal of 100 percent compliance for the Windows XP deadline.

The team imaged over 70 computers to deploy to Headquarters and the field offices. All equipment was successfully replaced and distributed to the user community by the April 8th deadline. These computers have replaced the older models and replaced computers running Windows XP.

I would like to recognize the following individuals that were part of the project and saw it to completion: Adel Ibrahim, Robin Rother, Phillip Thomas, Morris Johnson, Tanika Harris, Gilbert Sanchez, Edward Chi, Patricia Tolle, Gayle Pounds-Barnett, Heather Schlecht, and Kaye Burnep. Below are two photos from the Saturday.

Administrator Larry Mitchell graciously came into the office on Saturday as well and provided lunch for the team. We would like to extend our gratitude to Mr. Mitchell for taking the time out of his busy schedule to share a few hours with us.

Over the next several month, machines not set to be retired will be loaded with the new updated Windows 7 image. We are planning on ordering the next batch of computers soon.



Left to Right: Morris, Johnson Larry Mitchell, Tanika Harris, Abhai Singh , Edward Chi and Dan Knight



Left to Right: Abhai, Singh Morris Johnson, Tanika Harris and Edward Chi

PSP Change Control Working Group

The Grain Inspection Packers & Stockyards Administration has many teams that help it function more effectively. The PSP CCWG is one of the many teams that we have. What makes up an effective team? An effective team works with its fellow members to accomplish overall objectives driven by the bigger picture. The following 12 C's make up an effective, successful, defined team.

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Clear Expectations | 7. Collaboration |
| 2. Context | 8. Communication |
| 3. Commitment | 9. Creative Innovation |
| 4. Competence | 10. Consequences |
| 5. Charter | 11. Coordination |
| 6. Control | 12. Cultural Change |

One of the best ways to improve team performance is team building. The CCWG met in April 2014 for some team building. Below is a picture of some team building involving improving our collaboration, communication, and creative innovation skills.



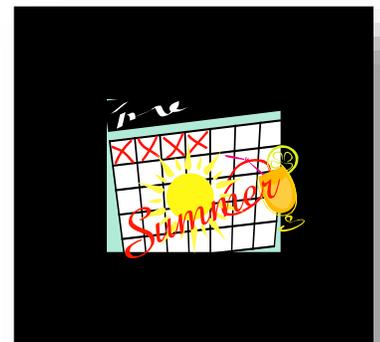
101 Critical Days of Summer

The season is changing and the warm weather is rapidly approaching. With that there will be a lot more traffic outdoors and not just on the roads. It's that time of year to get your yards in order.

Memorial Day weekend is the beginning of the "101 Most Critical Days" that lasts through the Labor Day weekend. Historically, this time is the most dangerous for people. Our goal is no fatalities and no reportable injuries to any GIPSA personnel or their families. It is a high goal but one that is attainable through hard work and increased awareness. The benefits of this goal are self-evident...our people safe and sound.

Especially during this time everyone needs to be aware of the potential hazards that come with increased activity outdoors and in recreational activities. In most mishaps it seems like there is an urgency that compels people to take shortcuts. We can stop those by the use of common sense. Often the savings in time is only a few seconds and does not justify the increased risk. Take the time to think out a process and do it safely.

So often when we investigate accidents we find that people had been drinking. Statistically your chances of being in any kind of accident go up rapidly when you've been drinking (yes, even one). So just a word on drinking and driving – DON'T. It's not worth the risk.



*Continued, see **Summer** on page 16.*

Summer *from page 15*

Here's a couple of things you can do to make sure your summer is a pleasant and safe one.

- Think out what you're doing
- Use safety equipment
- Apply common sense
- Don't drink and drive
- Use your seatbelt
- Consider the hazard and risk

Boating, fishing, ATV riding, driving, motorcycling, bike riding, gardening/lawn care, and hiking/camping are some popular activities that many of you may enjoy doing this summer so I've listed some hazards and risks associated with them to consider and be aware of:

Hazards

Weather (rain, extreme temps, and wind).
 Location (on or near water, mud, forest, urban, dirt trails, gravel roads, urban roads).
 Wildlife (Bears, Moose, Wolves, mosquitoes, and other friendly critters).
 Activities (travel, combat fishing, filleting fish, tackle preparation).
 Attendees (family members, children, friends, the public).
 Lawn Equipment (blade, chute, loose objects, weed eater, trimmer)
 Insecticides/Fertilizers
 Experience Level
 Accidents (falls, rollovers, collisions, drowning)

Risks

Injuries due to severe weather, hypothermia from a wet and cold environment. Don't forget the sunblock, the sun reflecting off the water will at times cause severe sunburn.
 Incidents involving water.
 POV mishaps potentially from traveling long distances.
 Animal's protective instincts, animal bites, insect-borne diseases, skin irritations, and other bothersome pests.
 Drowning, stuck in mud flats, sprains, broken bones, overexertion, slips, trips & falls, flying hooks in close proximity, cuts and punctures from knives and hooks.
 Relative health of attendees.
 Fueling (spills, vapors, and explosions)
 Eye injury due to flying particles.

This list of hazards and risks associated with the many different activities is just the tip of the iceberg and I'm sure will little to no effort you can think of a bunch of other activities, hazards, and risks, I'm just hoping to get you to think about them before injury or worse strikes you or your loved ones. This is a beautiful time of year let's all get through it together safely.....Have a wonderful safe summer!

GIPSA Safety Office.

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

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 18

Training from cover page 17

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
FAX (202) 690-3951
Jennifer.s.hill@usda.gov



By May 23, 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.

USDA, GIPSA, Stop 3620
Departmental Initiatives and
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1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-3649