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OCFO / OCIO Calendar

December 2009 – February 2010

Christmas Day	12/25
New Year's Day	1/1
Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday	1/18
Valentine's Day	2/14
Presidents' Day	2/15

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Season's Greetings:

The holiday season is upon us and many are busy selecting that perfect gift or making travel plans while others are thinking of loved ones fighting in Iraq and/or Afghanistan to keep this country safe. Then, there are those who are trying to accept the loss of their military family members, especially those fallen during that horrible rampage at Fort Hood Army Base in Texas.

We must keep uppermost in our hearts and minds the sacrifices and hardships of our troops and their families for without them, celebrating with our families would not be possible. As you join in holiday activities, please be safe!

- Sheila W. Greene, Editor-in-Chief

Arlington Cemetery.
Photo by Kaitlin Horst,
Arlington National Cemetery Public Affairs

NO TEXTING WHILE DRIVING !!!

by Lisa Keeter

An Executive Order (E.O.) issued by President Obama on Thursday, Oct. 1, 2009, bans Federal employees from text messaging while driving on government business. The E.O. applies to employees operating government owned vehicles or driving privately owned vehicles on official business. The E.O. also bans the use of government supplied electronic equipment while driving.

We will keep you informed on policy issued by the General Services Administration, Office of Personnel Management and USDA and the accompanying implementation plans. The E.O. allows for agencies to implement policy with disciplinary actions for those employees ignoring the ban. The E.O. can be found at:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Executive-Order-Federal-Leadership-on-Reducing-Text-Messaging-while-Driving/

Roadmap to an ITSM Best Practices Framework: An Effective Remedy-Part 2

Prepared by ITSM Team Members

The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) is implementing Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) based on the framework established by the Information Technology Infrastruture Library (ITIL), a collection of best practices in the IT service industry (see "ITSM – An Effective Remedy, Part 1" in *OCFO OCIO Connections #8*).

Over the past several months, an OCIO team, supported by the Apptis/BMC vendor, has conducted customer workshops that "peel back the onion" to provide a clear understanding of the layers of this complex initiative. Consequently, International Technology Services has assembled a highly experienced team to ensure that all aspects of the delivery are addressed. ITS Associate Chief Information Officer David Shearer says, "ITS currently supports over 45,000 USDA staff and we've done a good job of developing IT service processes organically over the years. However, the Remedy/ITSM initiative provides us an opportunity to assess existing support principles, practices, and procedures against industry best practices. We have a clear objective: to improve meantime to repair/resolve customer problems in the most cost-effective way possible. This is what our customers expect, and we recognize continual improvement is inherent to meeting this expectation."

Remedy-Release 1, expected in late March 2010, will be an important step to meet that expectation. This will bring the core Remedy toolset online and retire the current Magic Service Desk Express application. As more components of Remedy are added, there will be many changes and improvements to how the OCIO/ITS organization supports its customer base.

An Effective Remedy by Spring 2010 – The Core Toolset

Below are core items that are included in Remedy-Release 1:

- ***End-User Requests*** - The mechanism by which personnel can request assistance or service. Right now, Magic Service Desk Express provides the ability for employees to ask for help without having to make a phone call. The future is to have many avenues to request service to include an Outlook plug-in, e-mail, Web, and telephone.
- ***Incident Management*** - Addresses fixing problems with a printer or a workstation, etc., or the inability to access a particular Web site on the USDA backbone. Incident management differs from a service request for a product, such as hardware or software, to be procured and/or installed.
- ***Change Management*** - Addresses those types of changes that are deemed standard. A standard change is defined as any item that is pre-approved and follows the same delivery process every single time. A Change Control Board (CCB and overall change approval organization) is not required to review these *standard* changes each time; however, they are recorded. An example of a type of standard change is the delivery of Anti-Virus and security patch updates to workstations and servers.
- ***Reporting*** - The Remedy toolset comes with standard reports *Out Of the Box*. These will be available to help with providing feedback and tracking of incidents and standard changes.
- ***Foundation Data and Legacy Applications*** - Many tools used today will be either migrated or an interface to them will be created such as an Office Information Profile (OIP), Enterprise Asset Tracking System (EATS), Service Desk Express, or Magic.

(Continued on page 3)

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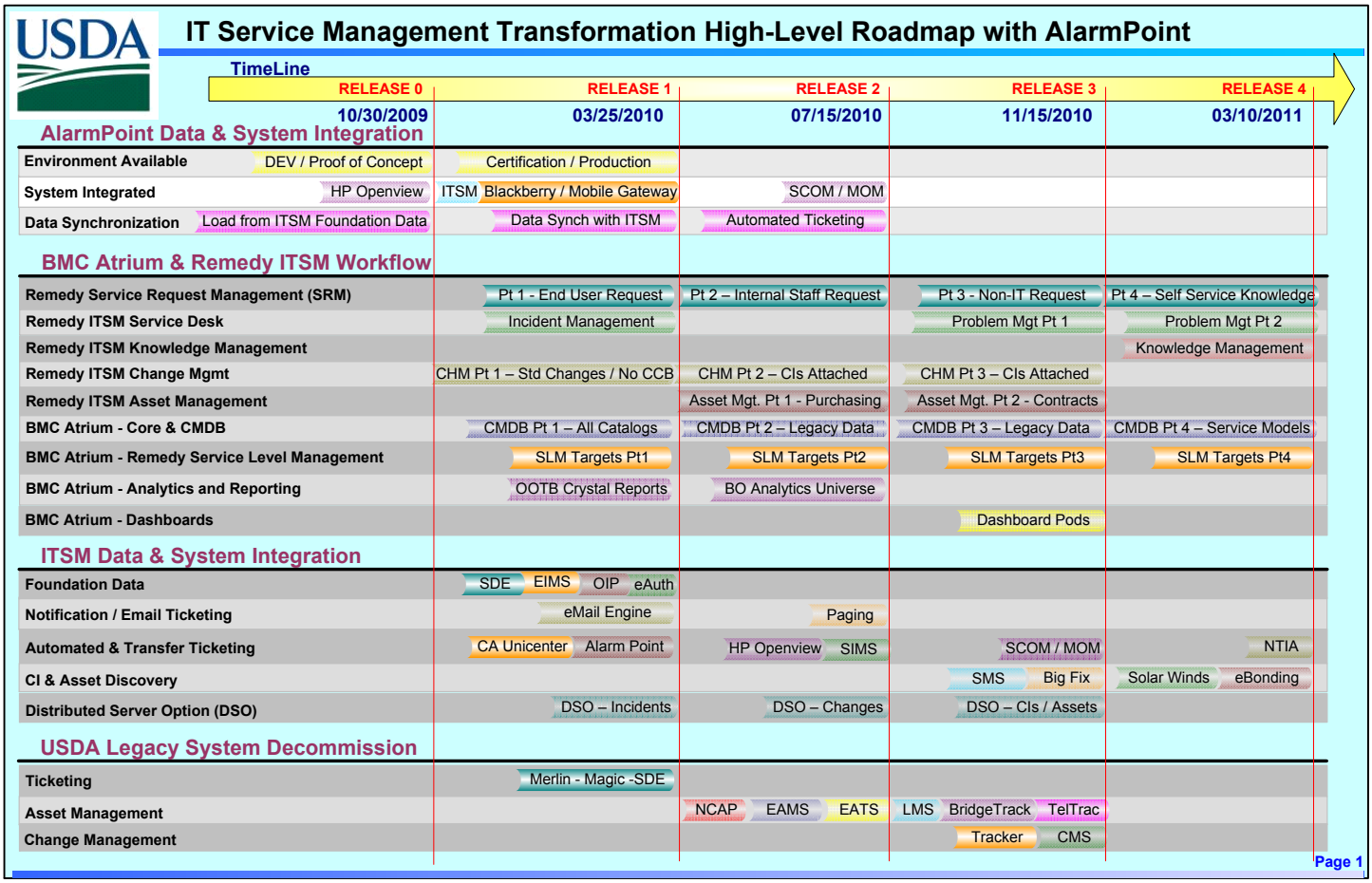
The Roadmap below illustrates the scope and complexity of implementing ITSM for ITS customers (other USDA-wide efforts are underway through NITC). It shows 4 overall program areas, numerous components, 62 distinct tasks, and 4 major release stages between March 2010 and March 2011.



Caption: The Roadmap. Click here for a downloadable version with glossary - http://www.ocio.usda.gov/news/doc/ITSM_Roadmap.pdf

The Roadmap is a high level timeline to delivering Remedy and ITSM to all of the currently supported USDA\OCIO\ITS customers. The success of ITSM will be a collaborative effort between customers and the OCIO and ITS teams providing the service. Additionally, four main initiatives are underway simultaneously:

- *BMC Atrium and Remedy*–while Remedy is the core ITSM toolset that allows the efficient integration of ITSM tasks, Atrium helps integrate those tools so they work effectively together and it also organizes data generated by Remedy into a configuration management database (CMDB).
- *ITSM Data and System Integration*–brings together core data from other applications, data standards, external applications providing information to the system via one way or two way delivery, and support tickets from other Remedy systems into one cohesive system usable across USDA.
- *AlarmPoint Data and System Integration*–allows for a robust notification mechanism to ITS technical support personnel to allow for a timely response to service requests. The notification can be via Blackberry and Smart phones; it is an avenue to allow pro-active prevention of potential critical system failures or major outages.
- *USDA Legacy System Decommission*–the process for retiring obsolete systems and applications currently in use by USDA and moving the designated capabilities into Remedy.

The Roadmap is just one of many communications tools and initiatives to help ITS customers understand and appreciate the complexity of the ITSM project. Others include a future, new ITSM SharePoint site to help customers and OCIO IT support staff, an updated OCIO web site with customer facing information to help our customers at USDA understand how the changes will improve their day-to-day work, and direct interaction with customer agencies and departmental offices through workshops and training.

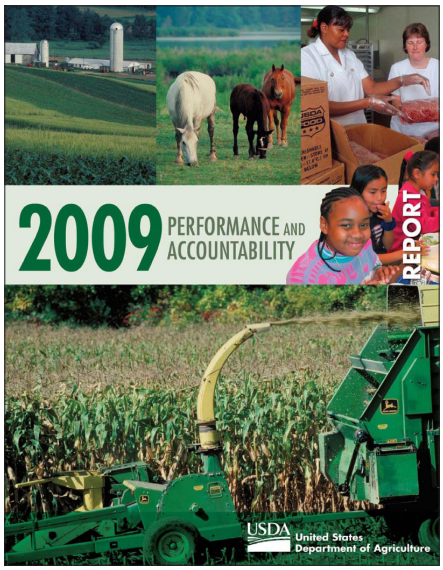
Next ITSM Article: Remedy Collaboration Across OCIO

On *PAR* with Accountability

by Stewart Small

How did the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) spend taxpayer dollars during Fiscal Year (FY) 2009? Did USDA achieve all of its goals in terms of agency performance? The answers to these and other questions can be found in the Department's *FY 2009 Performance and Accountability Report (PAR)*.

The *FY 2009 PAR* is USDA's year-end progress report. It reviews the strategic goals and objectives the Department set for itself at the beginning of the fiscal year and compares initial targets to actual performance. The PAR is required by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA). GPRA calls for all Federal agencies to engage in a strategic planning process. This process should directly align resources with results and enhance the accountability of all Federal government endeavors to the American taxpayers who finance them.



Click on picture to download

The PAR highlights the six performance goals USDA strives to achieve to provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, and related issues. Those goals are:

- *Strategic Goal 1*: Enhance International Competitiveness of American Agriculture
- *Strategic Goal 2*: Enhance the Competitiveness and Sustainability of Rural and Farm Economies
- *Strategic Goal 3*: Support Increased Economic Opportunities and Improved Quality of Life in Rural America
- *Strategic Goal 4*: Enhance Protection and Safety of the Nation's Agriculture and Food Supply
- *Strategic Goal 5*: Improve the Nation's Nutrition and Health
- *Strategic Goal 6*: Protect and Enhance the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environment

The PAR is divided into four sections:

1. **Management's Discussion and Analysis –** Includes an overview of USDA, its funding sources, a look at the aforementioned performance goals, objectives and results, a discussion of future demands, risks, uncertainties, events, conditions and trends, and an overview of how the Department implements Federal management initiatives.
2. **Annual Performance Report –** Provides information on the actual performance of USDA agencies and their progress in achieving the performance goals.
3. **Financial Statements, Notes, Supplemental and Other Accompanying Information –** Offers a message from the Chief Financial Officer, a report from the Office of Inspector General (OIG), and the Department's financial statements.
4. **Other Accompanying Information –** A summary of USDA's management challenges and detailed information on audits conducted throughout the Department.

The Planning and Accountability Division (PAD) of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer oversees the PAR's production. PAD collects all the necessary information from USDA's agencies, audits conducted by the Office of Inspector General, and other sources. The division then combines that information and subjects it to a rigorous review process. This process converts all submitted text to a singular, audience-friendly tone that reflects USDA's goals as a whole. It also checks the text for accuracy, grammar and style. Once PAD completes this process, the agencies are given an opportunity to review the division's edits and provide any suggested changes. Afterwards, PAD sends the document to the Secretary's office for signature.

Per GRPA, the PAR must be published and released on November 15 of the calendar year. Since November 15 fell on a Sunday this year, the document was released on November 16. The *USDA FY 2009 PAR* can be downloaded from: http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdarpt/pdf/FINAL%202k9_USDA_Combined_PAR_11.25.09vF8.pdf

USDA Awards Contract under GSA's Networx's Acquisition Program

by Bob Fryer

Another milestone has been reached for the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). This past September, Paging Services became our first award under the General Service Administration's (GSA) Networx Acquisition program. Though this award represents a very small dollar amount for USDA, its true representation is in being the first service award for USDA under GSA's Networx's Acquisition Program; moving from the Federal Technology Service 2001(FTS 2001)/Crossover Acquisition program.

Verizon Business was the successful offeror for USDA's Paging Services. Verizon Business works with SkyTel to provide paging services for Networx customers. SkyTel is a leader in the paging industry, most extensive paging coverage in the United States, and offers the full suite of one-way and two-way paging services required under Networx, as well as numerous enhancements. USDA customers should be confident they will receive quality service at an affordable price.

As an overview to the services USDA is acquiring, OCIO has developed five "Fair Opportunity Awards" using "Request for Quotations" and three "Fair Opportunity Awards" under "Direct Awards." The Paging Services award fell under "Direct Awards." The five "Fair Opportunity Awards" using "Request for Quotations" which were developed represented a true collaborative effort throughout USDA. These service packages are Fixed Satellite Services, Wireless Data Services, Voice Services (included in Voice is Long Distance Services, Toll Free Services, and Calling Card Service), Conferencing Services, and finally Data Services. The three "Fair Opportunity Awards" under "Direct Awards" are Paging Services, Mobile Satellite Services, and Video Conferencing Services.

The goal of USDA's transition from FTS2001/Cross-Over to Networx's is to develop a robust, customer focused, telecommunications and information technology capability to support the agencies and reduce the price of these services through migrating to Networx's. The Networx program offers comprehensive, best value telecommunications providing for new technologies, industry partners, and ways to achieve a more efficient and effective government. Networx allows USDA to focus our resources on building seamless, secure operating environments while ensuring access to the best technology industry has to offer. To better understand the impact of Networx's to your agencies, you should seek out your Telecommunications Mission Area Control Officers (TMACO). They can help answer some of your questions and concerns. If they don't have the answer, they most likely know the key offices to get your question resolved. As we award additional contracts, the Project Management Office will inform the TMACOs and begin the "Transition Phase" of our Networx journey.

The TMACO Role and Responsibilities by Eve Makle-Wood

Paul Jurasin introduced you to the role of a Telecommunications Mission Area Control Officer (TMACO) in *OCFO/OCIO Connections,* May 2009. In Paul's article, you were given a broad and regulatory explanation of the role and responsibilities of a TMACO. In this article, we will go more in-depth into the day-to-day role of a TMACO.

Although the roles and responsibilities vary from agency to agency, the end result is the same--a request from a user for telecommunications services and products. Most TMACOs have the responsibility of provisioning or ordering telecommunications services from various sources. Examples of the types of services ordered on behalf of an agency are: wireless and cellular services, data or voice circuits, audio and video service requests, and calling card requests. TMACOs are also responsible for obtaining the equipment or components required for deployment of those services (i.e. wireless devices, routers, conferencing equipment and VOIP telephone sets).

TMACOs maintain an accurate inventory that details the location, type of service, and identifying components of a service. The inventory aspect is crucial in a variety of ways. An accurate inventory provides the TMACO with the ability to know what services are being used, feedback of details on usage and costs associated with these services (for reporting purposes), and identifies opportunities to reduce costs or technology upgrades or refreshes. TMACOs also use the inventory as a baseline for determining their approach for transition: moving services from one contract to another as with the upcoming transition to NETWORX.

Your TMACO works closely with the agency Telephone Control Officers (TCOs) either directly or indirectly. The TCO orders local phone services through GSA negotiated contracts such as WITS2001 or through commercial services. The TMACO and TCO relationship is critical. Both are responsible for separate services but they must maintain one agency inventory which should be identical. Thus, providing a more accurate picture of all services used and required by an agency to meet and perform its mission as well as provide for a smoother transition from contract to contract. This will prove vital in the upcoming months as agencies prepare to transition its services to the newly awarded NETWORX and WITS3 contracts.

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Your TMACO is the liaison to General Services Administration (GSA) contracts for local, wireless, and data services. In fact, GSA has an annual conference that allows the TMACO to keep abreast of new and emerging technologies as well as forge valuable working relationships with industry leaders.

In addition to the external relationships developed by the TMACO, there are many internal relationships that are fostered to enable the TMACO to perform various functions of their roles such as:

- Collaborating with Network Engineers when provisioning new access circuits on an agency network or to perform analyses of the impact of applications or deployments that affect the Universal Telecommunications Network (UTN) or an agency's networks;
- Teaming with the agency Information System Security Program Manager (ISSPM) to ensure security considerations are applied to new applications or services as required by the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA); and
- Submitting the appropriate documentation and present the findings from studies and cost analysis from various resources to obtain Departmental approval from the Technical Review Board (TRB) of applications or services that it wishes to implement.

The TMACO is also a member of the TMACO Working Group which was developed to provide support in the resolution of billing issues with FTS vendors, negotiate contracts on behalf of the Department, provide a platform for TMACOs to share ideas and discuss emerging technologies and meet with industry telecommunications service providers, and to provide a single arena for training on information systems that are vital in performing the role of the TMACO. The coordination of the Working Group is under the purview of the National Telecommunications Services and Operations (NTSO) division managed by Michael Thomas under the direction of Telecommunications Services and Operations (TSO) led by John Donovan.

Citizen and Airman Across Four Decades

Chief Michael L. Thomas
Wyoming Air National Guard

As so many news reports have indicated, World War II veterans are passing in great numbers and their achievements have been amplified on TV and in movies. Another body of veterans is just beginning to retire from the workplace--our Vietnam Veterans. The last of these faithful and dedicated men and women are now departing the shops, offices, factories, and the National Guard. The National Guard is an opportunity to serve our nation in uniform with the same pride and courage they had in their youth. Few have been able to serve as long and with such dedication as one enlisted member of the Wyoming National Guard. That of Chief Master Sergeant Michael L. Thomas, a citizen Airman, a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) employee, and a member of our community for these past 50 plus years.

Chief Thomas is one of the few senior enlisted leaders who could talk through the meanings of conflict when support for our men and women did not exist. Then, being a part of the military was seen as demeaning, citizens would shun you, a nation would avoid you, and your pride was weakened through lack of support and acceptance. For you see, he lived Vietnam as so many did and moved forward.

September 11, 2001, marked a time of change for our nation and for Chief Thomas. Chief Thomas enlisted in the National Guard with the drive and intensity to serve his nation in the time of great need, as he had done almost 30 years earlier as a young Airman. In doing so he could never have anticipated the impact he would have on the Airmen serving with him, the officer leading him, and the intensely personal drive serving within him. For it was through the lessons of his Vietnam experience that he would change today's National Guardsmen through example of dedication, through acknowledging weaknesses and strengths, and instilling pride of service within them. Through sharing his experiences of past decades and the impact on our military members, Chief Thomas has been able to mentor our nation's young Airmen into today's citizen Airmen who deploy more often and are in greater danger than in past decades.

Many of today's young Airmen serving in the National Guard are indebted to these attributes that Chief Thomas emulates along with the other veterans who have served. His experiences, dedication to these young Airmen and the intensely personal mentoring of the men and women who serve under his oversight are the contributions that make our Veterans in uniform so valued, so cherished. With the passing of time, a valued generation will leave our nation's military service never to return. Please join me in thanking Chief Thomas and the many men and women who serve our Nation as both Citizen Airmen/Soldiers and employees of USDA. Thank you, Chief!

Post Script: As an employee of USDA, I'm very proud of our agencies' contributions to our Nation and its citizens. As a member of the National Guard, I'm proud of the service to my State, Nation, and local community; for I have served in uniform for almost thirty years under the mentorship of warrior-like Chief Thomas.

Robert Fryer, USDA employee and
Lieutenant Colonel, Wyoming National Guard

NFC Launches New Training Tool for EmpowHR

by Theresa Trentacoste

The National Finance Center (NFC) develops, maintains, and operates a Human Resource Management System, *EmpowHR*, for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other Federal customers. As part of the support for this System, NFC provides user training products and application documentation for *EmpowHR*. NFC understands the critical role this support plays in the effective day-to-day use of the application by the customer and has focused on enhancements in the delivery of these services. This focus is part of an overall modernization effort NFC has launched to improve our training program for *EmpowHR* and other NFC Payroll/Personnel applications. This modernization effort is in its initial phase with many other planned improvement initiatives forthcoming.

NFC has developed instructional content on *EmpowHR* in a self-paced, automated training tool called the User Productivity Kit (UPK). The initial implementation of these UPK training modules focused on the navigation within *EmpowHR*. Since that time, NFC has expanded the content to processing instructions and tips in subsequent versions of UPK. UPK modules can be viewed at http://www.empowhr.gov/9.0/training.html.

UPK offers significant training advantages for *EmpowHR* customers including:

- **Ongoing training of *EmpowHR* users –** UPK allows for timely, on-demand training that is within the context of actual work task. UPK will walk users through specific process keystrokes, greatly reducing reliance on manuals and help desks, thus increasing productivity.
- **Training available on employee's desktop –** UPK allows the user to access the training from their desktop, thus eliminating the dependency on "instructor-based" training. UPK does not require any instructor resources, scheduling, or logistical support. Training can take place where and when the end user needs it.

By using UPK, NFC customer agencies have an opportunity to:

- Enhance training available to employees;
- Deploy more sophisticated training methodologies utilizing the latest in training development and delivery;
- Increase levels of employee training without substantially increasing staffing resources needed or cost of training delivery;
- Expand level of documentation to employees using *EmpowHR;* and
- Improve workforce capabilities and productivity

UPK provides the following value for supporting *EmpowHR*:

- State-of-the-art instructional design tools to rapidly build and tailor documentation, instructor-led training materials, Web-based training to fit organizational needs;
- Live-application performance support with transactional and procedural information to maximize user efficiency;
- Delivery of information to customers quickly and effectively;
- Improved end user training and transition with upgrades and product enhancements; and
- Reduced dependence on NFC and agency help desk assistance and instructor-led training for end users

Many changes to NFC's training program are planned for the remainder of this and next calendar year. NFC is confident that these changes will continue to enhance the NFC training experiences for its customers. For more information on this training initiative, please contact NFC via e-mail at nfcpubs@usda.gov.

New Contact Information

NITC SERVICE DESK

Call: 888-USE-NITC (888-873-6482) or 816-926-6660

E-mail: nitcservicedesk@ocio.usda.gov

AGLEARN HELP DESK

Call: 866-633-9394, an Integrated Voice Response System

E-mail: mailto:Aglearn.communications@usda.gov

Training for First Phase of FMMI is Successful!

by Jane Simon

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) uses many acronyms, but in 2009, the one that was probably printed, spoken about, or even thought of the most was "FMMI." If by any chance you have not heard of FMMI, it is the Financial Management Modernization Initiative, USDA's new financial system supported by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) to modernize the Departmental and agency financial and administrative payment and program general ledger systems.

FMMI is replacing the Foundation Financial Information System (FFIS), and represents a step into the future utilizing a state-of-the art software package to provide online, real-time transaction capability. The FMMI portal displays the various process areas, controls, and system interfaces together under one user interface. Integration with eAuthentication allows the user a single login to access FMMI and a wide range of USDA Web applications.

The Controller Operations Division (COD), Customer Liaison and Training Branch (CLTB), is tasked with ensuring that all users receive the appropriate level of FMMI training. CLTB is working closely with Accenture, the management consulting, technology services, and outsourcing company that adapted FMMI to USDA specifications, to implement a very aggressive training schedule and ensure all training goals are accomplished.

CLTB worked with agency training leads and Accenture to map out and assign a customized learning plan for each FMMI user through AgLearn based on the employee's roles and responsibilities. Since AgLearn is so vital for recording and tracking FMMI course assignments and completions, CLTB staff completed extensive AgLearn administrator training. Upon completion, they became certified AgLearn administrators for the entire Department. The certification allows CLTB to track ongoing FMMI training and record completion of courses. Using this information, CLTB prepares several reports—including a daily report that allows each agency's point of contact to track class registrations and completions for their respective employees—to assist agency training leads. This process ensures that users get the proper course credit required to gain access to the FMMI application. To date, CLTB has coordinated or assisted in the training of more than 1,700 employees throughout USDA. Classes have been held in 10 different locations, including the District of Columbia; Albany, California; St. Louis, Missouri; and New Orleans, Louisiana.

This massive effort by CLTB also included arranging the facilities used for training at the OCFO-New Orleans location. CLTB obtained instructors and coordinated classrooms, times, locations, materials, and assistance for employees requiring accommodations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. They sent out reminder notifications, printed sign-in sheets, monitored attendance, coordinated substitutes (as required) and reported and followed-up on technical issues. Additionally, CLTB coordinated user acceptance testing which provided COD employees with specific test scenarios relative to their individual job functions.

Transitioning the 17 agencies and staff offices which make up USDA into FMMI will occur in 3 major deployment phases beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 through FY 2011. On October 1, 2009, the Office of the Inspector General, Departmental Administration and Staff Offices, and Foreign Agricultural Service went "live." The next FMMI deployment wave is scheduled for February 1, 2010, and will include Agricultural Research Service, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service, and Economic Research Service. Implementation of the Food Safety and Inspection Service will begin April 1, 2010, and will complete the scheduled FY 2010 implementations.

For more information on FMMI deployment schedules, training, "parking lot" and frequently asked questions, and all things FMMI, please visit http://info.fmmi.usda.gov.

How OCFO and OCIO Connect to Support USDA Initiatives

Annual IT Product and Services EXPO

by Bruce Pacot

The 15th Annual Information Technology (IT) Products and Services EXPO was held on Wednesday, November 4, 2009, at the Beacon Building in Kansas City, Missouri. The event was FREE to all government and contractor personnel with security access to the Beacon Building. Other attendees needed an escort to participate.

This very successful EXPO was hosted by the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) National Information Technology Center (NITC) and cooperatively coordinated by Federal Direct Access Expositions (FDAE). The EXPO featured 65 vendors and had more than 625 attendees from USDA agencies and offices, other U.S. Federal departments, and contractors.

The EXPO was a great opportunity for vendors to showcase capabilities and interact with USDA personnel in need of staying up to date with technology and available services. The vendors showcased their products and services for enterprise IT solutions, professional services, office suppliers, and furniture providers. Attendees were able to evaluate products with hands-on demonstrations. They met face-to-face with vendor representatives who could assist with achieving established goals. An event listing of participating booth vendors and their capabilities was given to each attendee.

The 16th Annual IT Products and Services EXPO is scheduled for November 3, 2010. Since there was a waiting list this year, the area for the exhibits will be reconfigured to fit up to three additional table top booths for vendors. This reconfiguration will accommodate a total of 68 vendors--absolute maximum.

National Cyber Security Awareness Month by Evelyn Davis and Shana Lee

October is designated National Cyber Security Awareness Month. This year's theme "Our Shared Responsibility" reinforces the message that all computer users, not just those in industry or government, have a shared responsibility to follow good cyber security practices.

There are several resources containing information on how to be safer online at home, at work and at school. To learn more, check out the following:

- Department of Homeland Security (DHS) National Cyber Security Awareness Month Web Area (http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc_1158611596104.shtm): Contains information associated with National Cyber Security Awareness Month.
- The White House Blog – Protecting Yourself Online (http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/Protecting-yourself-online/): Provides video of President Obama's message on the importance of cyber security.
- StaySafeOnline.org (http://www.staysafeonline.org/): Contains resources for home users, educators and small businesses as part of National Cyber Security Alliance's (NCSA's) effort "to empower and support digital citizens to use the Internet securely and safely, protecting themselves and the cyber infrastructure."
- OnGuardOnline.gov (http://www.onguardonline.gov/): "Provides practical tips from the federal government and the technology industry to help you be on guard against Internet fraud, secure your computer, and protect your personal information."

Remember, cyber attacks can occur anytime. We need to remain vigilant 24 hours a day, and practice the knowledge highlighted during National Cyber Security Awareness Month. Cyber criminals are opportunists, and they can seek out and exploit vulnerabilities anytime. By exercising good cyber security practices, we will not only keep our families, personal assets and information more secure, but also help improve the overall security of cyberspace.

Chairperson Receives Award by Clay Cole

Bruce A. Pacot

The Greater Kansas City Federal Executive Board (FEB) recognized Bruce A. Pacot of the National Information Technology Center (NITC) for serving as the Chairperson for the Veterans Affairs Committee for the 2009 fiscal year. Bruce was also re-elected to serve another term as the Chairperson for the 2010 fiscal year.

The mission of the Veteran Affairs Committee is to support Veterans in the federal community and to promote Veteran activities in the metropolitan area.

The committee is currently very active in supporting the Heart of America Stand Down for Homeless Veterans, working to ensure eligible veterans are aware of the Military Service Deposit Benefit program, participating in special events such as the Honor Flight for World War II Veterans, and keeping veterans informed of Veterans Affairs benefits and changes.

Staff Recognition

☆ Recent Promotions ☆

Richard Barr, NITC/TOSD
Allen Brass, NITC/TOSD
Andrew Campbell, NITC/AASD
Russell Dobbins, OCIO
Brian Fields, OCIO
Dwight Hansen, ITS/TSD/VA-WV
Ed Howard, OCIO
Eun Hwang, TSO/NTSO
Scott O'Hare, NITC/TOSD
Senta Owens, NITCTOSD
Matthew Reiss, NIT/DOC
Kris Seen, NTSO
Brandon Sifford, NITC
Susan Swanner, NITC/SS
Don Vukas, NITC/SMB
Stephen Wilson, TSO/NTSO

☆ Recent Hires ☆

Anthony Clark, NITC/SWED
Margaret Cummings,ITS/TSD/ID-OR
Jerome Davin, NITC/AgLearn
Dave DeLuca, NITC/SED
Jeffrey Dyke, NITC/SED
Mary Flores, ITS/TSD/TX
Pat Houtakker, NITC/ISD
Michael Keenan-Harte, NTSO
Dan McCord, NITC
Dwayne Netherland, ITS/TSD/LA
Ronald Peek, ITS/IOD/HOB
Travis Price, NITC/SS
Ian Seimplenski, ITS/IOD/TOB
Ken Sonnenmoser, NITC/SED
Victoria Turley, NITC/SED

☆ Retirements ☆

Betty J. Bomani, ITS/IOD/TOB
Michael Davis, NITC
Richard Sabo, ITS/IOD/CSB
Mary Eschenbauch, ITS/TSD/WI

Connections Communications Team

Sheila W. Greene, Editor-in-Chief
Steve Spector, Communications Analyst/Evergreen IT

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Cyber Security - Evelyn Davis
National Information Technology Center - Bruce A. Pacot
National Telecommunications Services & Operations - Bob Fryer

To e-mail a POC, just click on his or her name.

The Combined Federal Campaign, or CFC, is the only authorized workplace charitable giving drive for Federal employees. It provides opportunities for all USDA staffs to create a community of compassion during the holiday season and have fun while raising money for good causes. Following are images of activities sponsored by the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), Departmental Management (DM), Farm Service Agency (FSA), National Information Technology Center (NITC), and Rural Develpment (RD).

OCIO Breakfast

DM "Everything $1"

FSA County Fair

NITC Football Contest

RD Bake Sale

Happy Holidays

from the

OCFO-OCIO Connections Team