



ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FACILITIES DIVISION

contracting...engineering...real property...safety...health...environmental...space

Employee Update No. 10

April 2001

INNOVATIVE FACILITIES SUPPORT INTO THE 21ST CENTURY !

~ FD Slogan~

The HUBZONE Program

A HUBZone is a historically underutilized business zone, which is an area located within one or more qualified census tracts, qualified nonmetropolitan counties, or lands within the external boundaries of an Indian reservation .

The purpose of the HUBZone program is to provide Federal contracting assistance for qualified small business concerns located in historically underutilized business zones in an effort to increase employment opportunities, investment, and economic development.

The HUBZone program consists of three parts:

- HUBZone Set-Aside: Competition is restricted to HUBZone small business concerns when

there is a reasonable expectation that offers will be received from two or more HUBZone concerns and award will be made at a fair market price.

- HUBZone Sole Source Award: Contract award to a HUBZone small business concern on a sole source basis without considering small business set-asides. Sole source award must meet the criteria stated in FAR 19.1306(a)1-6.
- Price Evaluation Preference for HUBZone Small Business Concerns: Under full and open competition, a price preference is given to HUBZone small business concerns by adding 10 percent to all other offers (except those listed in FAR 19.1307(b) 1-4) prior to evaluation.

In support of the HUBZone Program and other Federal Procurement Socioeconomic Programs, FD is looking at innovative ways to maximize participation with minimal impact on construction budgets.

Energy and Accessibility Efforts in FY 2001

In a continuing effort to improve energy conservation and physical access for the physically challenged in ARS buildings and facilities, the Agency earmarked over \$1.0 million from the FY 2001 Special R&M funds to implement eligible projects. The Areas submitted a total of 42 accessibility projects (\$2.4 million) and 67 energy projects (\$4.5 million) for funding consideration. FD reviewed the projects and obtained funding approval from the Administrator for 22

accessibility projects (\$499,500) and 15 energy projects (\$503,740). The Areas must obligate these funds by September 30, 2001.

Award Winners

At April's All-Hands Meeting, two FD employees were recognized for their significant accomplishments this past year.

Valencia Winstead won the annual AFM Diversity Award. With little fanfare, Valencia has distinguished herself over the years with her efforts to pursue equal opportunity for all AFM employees. In addition to her involvement in the Beltsville Area Mentoring Program, she has worked with participants in the Aspiring Leadership and Women's Executive Leadership Programs, professional associations representing minorities, and local high school and college students seeking part-time jobs with ARS.

FD's **Ken Cook** received an award recognizing his outstanding efforts with the Combined Federal Campaign. Kudos to both Ken and Valencia.

Changes in FD

After nearly 39 years of Federal service, **Kathy Morris** decided to hang up her hard hat and begin a new life of rest and relaxation, effective March 30, 2001. Kathy

held numerous positions during her career, dealing with cooperative agreements, purchasing, and for the last several years, construction contracting. Kathy became FCB Chief on February 2, 1999, and held that position until her retirement. Kathy's knowledge, experience, expertise, and presence will be greatly missed! Best of luck Kathy!

Brenda Wood was selected as the new Chief of the Facilities Contracts Branch, effective March 11, 2001. Brenda is no stranger to the AFM family. Prior to joining FCB she worked in PPD. Brenda's supervisory skills and diverse knowledge in the area of contracting will be an asset to the Branch. Congratulations and Good Luck Brenda!

On April 2, **Valencia Winstead** began a 30-day detail assignment in the office of the Deputy Administrator for AFM. Valencia will work on various assignments, including the review of Policy and Procedures, grievances, and answering hot line complaints. During her detail, **Ira Craig** will be acting Assistant FD Director. We wish them both the best.

Darleen Masten accepted the position of Procurement Analyst/Contract Specialist, joining FCB on March 25, 2001. Darleen comes to FCB from PPD. She will assume the analytical and contracting

duties previously held by Tony Wimbush. We wish Darleen well in her new position.

Bob Serrano, last year's newest Space Management Specialist, is this year's newest Realty Specialist. Bob will assume the position vacated by the retirement of Katherine Fisher, and will work with BA, NAL, and SAA. Welcome aboard, Bob!

What We Do -- Space Management Team

They are a team of nine, responsible for providing space management and building related support services to the REE agencies: ARS, ERS, CSREES, and NASS. They manage over 500,000 square feet of space in seven buildings in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. That's a lot of space! The Space Management Team is led by Darissa Simms, and includes five Space Management Specialists: Barbara Brown, Arlette Draper Clinton, Pam Cochran, Mary Wright, and a vacancy, with three Space Management and Realty Assistants: Joyce Cooper, Marian James, and Patricia Lockhart. The Space Management Team coordinates all REE moves in the

Washington Metropolitan Area, from cradle to grave. The team is responsible for meeting with customers to gain an understanding of their program and space needs, negotiating with the Department or GSA to obtain the space. They then develop plans that show the space layouts, provide specifications of heating/air conditioning, lighting, electrical and telephone outlets and cabling. The team uses Computer Aided Drafting for most of its designs. They meet with vendors to select the appropriate furniture layout. Their job requires coordinating with ITD and building managers to make sure telecommunication needs and building services are provided. During the build out of space, the Space Management Specialists work with the contractors to ensure that work is in accordance with space design and construction is completed timely. And yes, they take the lead in coordinating the overall move and work with the contractor to make corrections or changes as needed.

Along with a number of administrative tasks that go along with leasing and acquiring space for REE, the Space Management and Realty Assistants maintain the conference room reservations at GWCC. This includes making

sure the rooms are properly furnished and maintained for scheduled events. They are responsible for updating signage when changes occur and issuing equipment passes to employees who need to remove certain property from the building. For the DC offices, parking can be a challenge, so the Space Management Assistant is the Designated Agency Parking Representative for ERS, NASS, CRSEES, and ARS. The Space Management and Realty Assistants handle building maintenance repair work requests and control about 100 electronic key cards for employees in the Portals building, as well as other keys.

The Space Management Team has a tremendous responsibility for REE and are good at what they do. They have a broad customer base, and are valuable to FD and its mission.

What is FFIS?

Everyone's talking about it. A lot of people are involved in meetings and demonstrations. So what is FFIS? It's the Foundation Financial Information System, a fully integrated software package designed to meet budget and funds control needs, and complex multi-fund accounting and reporting requirements. In other words, it is a new and improved way of doing accounting. In order for USDA to comply with mandated Chief Financial Officers and Government

Management Reform Acts, USDA is working with the FFIS contractor, American Management Systems, to design each agency's individualized FFIS application. FFIS is not new to USDA. It has been around since 1995. Eight other agencies, including the Forest Service, are currently using the system. ARS, CSREES, ERS, and NASS must implement FFIS by October 1, 2001. The ARS FFIS Project Team is led by Jenny Dubbs, FMD, and John Crew, NAA's AAO. FFIS will impact all of us in FD; however, FCB and RPMB will be impacted to a greater degree because these two branches' responsibilities include obligating and spending funds for contracts and leases. The FD points of contact for FFIS are Valencia Winstead, Regina Herchak, Ira Craig, and Bob Serrano.

Space Update

The RPMB Space Management Team has been busy as usual. Here's the latest on move activities within REE:

CSREES:

With the exception of the Administrator of CSREES and her staff in the Whitten Building, the RPMB Space Management Team has

completed the consolidation of the CSREES staff at the Waterfront Center. On February 23, 2001, the final group, Civil Rights Staff, moved into their space on the first floor.

This project began in 1997, when space was needed for the relocation of employees in the 3rd wing of the South Building, for Phase I of the renovation project. Efforts to secure additional space at the Aerospace Building proved cost prohibitive. Attention turned to the leasing of a nearby 4-story building being vacated by the DC Government, the Waterfront Center.

On April 27, 1999, GSA entered into a lease agreement for the top 3 floors. The 1st floor space was added in June 2000. Between April 1999 and February 2001, RPMB designed 113,989 square feet of office/ conference room/storage space. A total of 8 moves from 3 separate locations were needed to complete the relocation of approximately 350 employees.

South Building Modernization: USDA received \$26 million in FY 2001 for Phase II (4th Wing) of the South Building's modernization project. NASS will occupy the 5th and 6th floors of this wing; the NASS lockup will be

located on the 5th floor and a portion of the 4th floor. The World Board will occupy the rest of the 4th floor. The design for the NASS space was completed in March 2001. Design of the security system required for the lockup is ongoing. The Department plans to award a construction contract later this Fall.

NASS:

The Team is also working on the relocation of the NASS training room currently located on the 6th floor of the 4th wing. This will be the last step in vacating NASS space in the 4th wing in preparation for the Phase II South Building renovation.

ARS:

The RPMB Space Management Team itself will be relocating to the 3rd floor on April 25, 2001. The Team's new location will be in rooms 3858 to 3870. Construction of the new space is complete and system furniture has been installed. The Team's telephone numbers will remain unchanged.

ARS Budget Update

A Government-wide rescission was enacted for the FY 2001 budget. A 0.22 percent rescission was assessed on all Federal agencies operating under discretionary budget authority (which includes ARS) for FY 2001. The ARS rescission reduced the Buildings and Facilities Account by \$163,000. All projects receiving

appropriations in FY 2001 were assessed on a pro rata basis. Repair and Maintenance funds were also hit; the reduction was taken from the Agency reserve.

The FY 2002 budget process is proceeding. House Hearings will be held in May 2001. As usual, FD is receiving a number of inquiries about facilities and hazardous waste cleanup projects.

The Next FD All Hands Meeting

Mark your calendar! The next FD All Hands meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 15. This will be our annual off-site meeting and will be held at the Riverdale Community Center. The next Semiannual FD Outstanding Employee will be recognized at this meeting. Additional details will be published soon. See Ira Craig if you want to join the Planning Committee to help coordinate the May 15 activities.

Multi-Cultural Event

The Civil Rights Staff has received approval to go forward with the planning of one annual Headquarters multi-cultural awareness event, called "Diversity Day." The plan is to include all cultures at

one celebration, instead of presenting individual observances throughout the year. Employees will be able to learn about all the cultures and everyone would feel included in the annual event. ARS Headquarters employees will continue to be notified of the Department's special observances throughout the year in a timely manner.

The Civil Rights Staff is seeking volunteers to help plan Diversity Day events. If you are interested in participating at a booth and/or a fashion show, donating an ethnic dish or just helping out in general, obtain supervisory approval first, then contact Sherell Brooks at sabrooks@ars.usda.gov by Thursday, April 19.

Observances

Employees are encouraged to participate and attend special observances programs.

Employees must receive approval from their supervisor to participate. Upcoming Special Observances:

- Professional Secretaries Week (celebrated the week of April 23)
- Take Our Daughters/Sons to Work Day (Thursday, April 26)

For more specific information about the programs, please call Carolyn Moore or Darlene Butler on 301- 504-6507 or visit the ARS EEO/CR office website <http://www.ars.usda.gov/eeo/>.

Take The LEAD

Open to GS-11's and above, the AFM LEAD Program is a rigorous, competitive program for high-potential employees interested in advancing within AFM. It is a unique combination of formal training, working with a mentor, details to other positions, travel to the field, shadowing senior executives, and self-development. Applications are due Friday, May 18, 2001, and can be found on the AFM Website at: www.afm.ars.usda.gov. To learn more about the program, talk to any current participants, visit the AFM Website, or contact the LEAD Program coordinator, Dave Carter, on 301-504-1008.

Missing Child Posters

Every month on its website, GSA provides photographs of 10 missing children. RPMB downloads these posters and displays them on the bulletin board in the FD kitchen. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) is the coordination point for information about missing children. To date, NCMEC has worked on 66,350 cases and recovered 47,284 kids.

NCMEC operates a 24-hour hotline at **1-800-843-5678**. Their website at www.ncmec.org serves as a coordination point with law enforcement agencies around the world and provides a resource for the preparation and distribution of missing children posters. Much more information about each child is available at this website.

If you happen to see any of the children on the posters, or believe you have information which could help authorities locate any of them, please contact NCMEC immediately at **1-800-843-5678**.

Tips In The Workplace

There has been a lot of news about misuse of email in the local communities recently. Employees are reminded that use of information technology resources is for official government business only. AFM-ITD published Policies and Procedures 253.4, Use Of Information Technology Resources, that defines acceptable and unacceptable uses of information technology resources, such as telephones, email, facsimile machines, and internet services. If you are unsure about what is allowable,

discuss with your supervisor.

We Need Articles!

If you have any articles or suggestions to improve the FD Newsletter, let Valencia or Pat know.

***“Constantly choosing
the lesser of two evils, is
still choosing evil.”
~ Jerry Garcia ~***