



# INTERAGENCY CONNECTION

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## Chair's Corner



As we approach a new calendar year, there exists a flurry of activity in the office of our Federal Executive Board. In January, you will receive information on upcoming activities planned for you and your

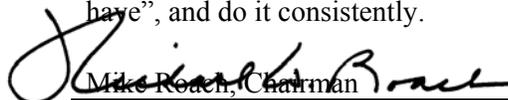
employees:

- ★ I will be distributing a letter asking that you identify employees to serve on the various FEB Councils. Most meetings are scheduled on a monthly basis and the benefit of one's participation is that the information shared among peers can prove to be invaluable. Please identify those employees whose interest, experience and skills are aligned with the Council's objectives, in order to ensure your agency receives the maximum benefit from their participation.
- ★ Nomination packets for our annual awards will be distributed in January as well. I encourage you to take time this month to speak with your managers and supervisors, regarding their completion of the packet once it arrives. Although it can be a time consuming task, it is a meaningful way to communicate your appreciation to the high performers of your organization. Once again, our selection committee will be comprised of staff members from our Congressional offices.
- ★ Also, you will receive information outlining our "Leadership Series"; five, one-day seminars intended to enhance leadership skills, abilities and competencies. This is a great way to provide leadership training, or 'refreshers', for your supervisors, managers and executives. Each year brings a variety of new topics that

allow the participants the opportunity to learn from each other, while benefiting from the presentations of some really great instructors.

- ★ At the same time, you will receive information on the '06' Leadership Program. This is our ten month program that takes a nontraditional approach to leadership development and enhancement. Following the model of other leadership programs in our community, this particular program focuses on the federal sector. It allows participants to tour various agencies and learn from briefings which are intended to provide a deeper understanding of management challenges, while identifying solutions and resources that can ensure the agency's success.

In addition to initiatives coordinated at the local level, our FEB is participating in a national effort to develop a 'business case' for all Federal Executive Boards. With the increasing challenges of budget cuts and reductions in workforce, the network created by the Federal Executive Boards provide all of us the opportunity to become even more effective, while in the midst of fewer resources. It is our hope the efforts expended toward this goal will simply articulate the value of the Federal Executive Board, create sustainable and guiding principles in which to operate, and quite simply, ensure "we do the best we can with what we have", and do it consistently.

  
Mike Roach, Chairman

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### A federal holiday poem

*Observing what has been a holiday tradition at GovExec.com since 1998, we present their annual ode to federal employees*

Twas the night before Christmas, and all 'cross the Web

Not a surfer was surfing, except for some feds.

The FAA cleared Santa for his annual flight,  
As the Weather Service predicted a clear, starry night.

FEMA stood by in case of snow, ice or sleet,  
As troops 'round the world maintained the peace.

When out on the Web there arose such a crowd  
Of kids on their mice click, click, clicking  
around 'Til they landed their browsers on a  
special Web site  
Where NORAD tracked Santa all through the  
night.

In English, in Spanish, in even Francais,  
The radar tracked Nicholas around on his sleigh.  
The radar bleep, bleeped as Santa drew close  
Drawn by the heat off of Rudolph's red nose.

The satellites tingled, the warning bells jingled  
When NORAD got sight of merry Kris Kringle.  
Kids 'cross the land knew their friends had been  
wrong.

NORAD's site proved it: Santa lives on!

And as feds 'round the world kept the peace  
through the night,  
Santa looked down, and called out with his  
might,  
"Thank you, civil servants! You fight the good  
fight!

Happy days to you all, and to all a fine night!"



**Happy Holidays  
from your  
Federal Executive Board Staff!**



### Top 10 Reasons we should Learn to Laugh a Whole Lot More

by John G. Carlson, Ph.D., published in Government Meetings Advantage Magazine

1. Laughter causes deep muscle relaxation. If you have ever laughed so hard that you have wet your pants, you know what I am talking about.
2. Laughter reduces stress. In addition to our bodies physically relaxing, we may forget our troubles, even if only temporarily.
3. Laughter has health benefits. When we laugh, our blood pressure and pulse rates drop slightly, endorphins (chemicals that suppress pain and help you to feel better) are released into our bodies, and T-cells (key fighters in our immune systems) increase.
4. Laughter is a universal language. Laughter is a unique human phenomenon that happens in every culture. It helps us to go beyond our cultural differences by emphasizing what we have in common.
5. Laughter promotes creativity and is conducive to learning. Chances are good that students will learn more from teachers who use laughter and humor, people who are able to laugh at themselves. Laughter breaks up the routine and can illustrate points. It also helps us to see life from a different perspective.
6. Laughter promotes communication. Think of laughter as a social lubricant. It connects, bonds, and builds rapport.
7. Laughter is an expression of affection. It is a way to love people by helping them to smile, laugh, experience a sense of connectedness, and feel better about themselves and about life.
8. Laughter is a reinforcer. Laughter can motivate and energize people.
9. Laughter is a coping mechanism. Laughter can help us to get through the tough times. As Bill Cosby says, "If you can find laughter in anything, you can survive it."
10. Laughter increases our rapport with others. This has professional implications. Compliance increases when we have established rapport with someone. For example, salespeople sell more, patients tend to comply more with health regimens, and students work harder in class.



## Spotlighting Federal Agencies *Did You Know...?*

### Administration outlines steps to governmentwide personnel overhaul

**GOVEXEC.COM** **DAILY**

**BRIEFING** November 15, 2005

By Karen Rutzick [krutzick@govexec.com](mailto:krutzick@govexec.com)

The Bush administration on Monday released a rough plan for implementing the broad changes that would be required if Congress passes yet-to-be-introduced personnel reform legislation.

The move marks the latest step in the administration's quest for a governmentwide overhaul of pay systems.

Dubbed the Working for America Act, the draft legislation was written by the Office of Personnel Management and the Office of Management and Budget. It would replace the General Schedule with performance and market-based pay, requiring reforms similar to those in progress at the Homeland Security and Defense departments.

Although the bill has not been introduced in Congress and officials have said it is still a work in progress, OMB and OPM outlined the implementation plan in response to queries from Sens. Susan Collins, R-Maine, and George Voinovich, R-Ohio.

The plan would grant OPM significant influence over the system, especially at the outset. The personnel agency would classify jobs and conduct research in order to set market-sensitive locality pay. It would also establish a governmentwide performance appraisal system, upon which raises would be based.

OPM would consult with OMB and the Federal Pay Council to determine the minimum and maximum salary for each payband as well as the local market pay that would supplant locality pay.

OPM also would determine how other agencies could divide up performance-based raises for the first five years. After that, agencies would manage their own pay-based systems within the boundaries of OPM regulations.

According to the plan, OPM would consult the Chief Human Capital Officers Council as well as "appropriate stakeholders" to design performance appraisal systems. This could result in fixed regulations or guidance, the plan stated.

In addition to the implementation plans, Collins and Voinovich asked OMB and OPM to expound upon the existing alternative personnel systems they looked to in writing the legislation.

"Twenty-five years of experience with 90,000 federal employees on alternative pay systems tells us pay for performance is better than the current system," said OMB Deputy Director for Management Clay Johnson. "Governmentwide pay reform can improve program results and employees' satisfaction."

In its response to Collins and Voinovich, the administration reported that employee turnover in four demonstration projects dropped significantly after implementation of new systems.

As an example, OMB and OPM held up the Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, whose turnover rate fell from 75 percent to 37 percent from 1996-2000 for employees rated "outstanding." The demonstration project started in 1998.

The administration also noted that agencies funded their new systems from their existing budgets. There were some start-up costs, however, for automated classification systems and conversion of employees to new payroll systems.

After a transition period, agencies spent the same amount on performance-based raises as they previously did on within-grade, quality-step and career ladder pay hikes, the administration reported.

The report found that agencies maintained control of costs in six areas:

- ★ Method of converting pay rates for individual employees to their rates in paybands.
- ★ Policy on starting salaries.
- ★ Type of pay progression and system of performance management.
- ★ Size and mix of salary and bonus budgets.
- ★ Choice of full-performance level pay rates.
- ★ Overall number and distribution of positions established across bands and work levels.



## ***Ethics In Decision Making: Should I Lie To Get Results?***

By: Dr. Jeff Magee, Ph.D., PDM, CSP, CMC Taken from the Weekly Leadership Moment (October 13<sup>th</sup>)

Managerial-Leaders every day are besieged with decisions that they must make which influence and impact the work lives of those on their team. And, there are times when employees are put in positions where they are expected to make decisions that will also influence and impact the lives of their co-workers.

While making a right decisions should be exceedingly simple and straight forward, amazingly we are today riddled with ruins in the wake of ENRON, WorldCom, Global Crossings, Arthur Andersen, HealthSouth, and many others that have made t evidently not so straight forward!

In those times when making a decision may seem at odds with your instincts and internal convictions as to what you should do, let a “*Code-of-Ethics*” be your guide as a manager, leader or professional coach.

Managerial-Leaders with healthy balance lead others to greatness by following seven simple management principles:

- Work from “Integrity” at all times and in all places
- Be “Accountable” for ones actions
- Work from a perspective of “Competence”
- Demonstrate “Professional Responsibility”
- Have “Respect For The Rights & Personal Dignity” of others
- Be “Committed To Those That You Serve”
- Demonstrate responsive and common sense “Social Responsibility”

Let this “*Code-of-Ethics*” be your guide when people are watching and when no one is present. When you are asked to make a decision or expect others to make decisions for the good of their position or the organization, let this code be your guide.

If you are expected to make decisions that are in conflict with this code, then engage in a dialogue with appropriate people on the specific code violation a decision is intruding into. And to avoid potential problematic decisions in your management future, publish your “*Code-of-Ethics*” and provide signed copies to your team, supervisors and customers.

Demonstrate that you are a manager of conviction and ethics, of which both are rare commodities in today’s work world!

## **Three Myths of Leadership**

Taken from Highest-Vision.com Oct05

**1. Leaders Must Have Formal Authority:** What happens when people throughout the organization believe leaders must have formal authority? People see leadership as a position, rather than as an action or behavior accessible to everyone. It invites those with formal authority to value their own opinions over others, and it keeps people who don’t have it from stepping to the plate and sharing in responsibility for the success of the organization. It divides the powerful from the powerless, and creates the tendency for the people in these two camps to lob blame back and forth across the fence that separates them. Each group holds the other responsible for the dynamics between them, and for bringing about the needed change.

**2. Leaders Must Have All the Answers:** Do leaders need to have all the answers? People tend to answer this question with a resounding “no,” but in everyday business the myth creeps subtly in to do its damage. Many leaders secretly harbor feelings of inadequacy and incompetence as they try to speak with unconvincing expertise and authority on every aspect of their complex business. At the same time, front line workers fault their leaders for lacking their own particular brand of genius and, consequently, ridicule or work against their efforts. Employees may almost arrogantly wait for a leader’s plan to fail, and take no responsibility for failures when they do occur.

**3. Leaders Should Know How to Achieve Their Visions:** Although at first blush it makes sense that leaders ought to know how they are going to achieve their visions, the speed of change in today’s world makes it prudent to reassess the “rightness” of the organization’s direction after each step taken and to make regular “course corrections.” Equally important, as things become increasingly complex, and people place value on contributing in meaningful ways to accomplishing a shared vision, it is crucial to consistently include the wisdom that exists everywhere in the organization. Sadly, efforts to create this agile, responsive and inclusive workplace can be misunderstood by many employees if they are not given the chance to really understand why and how things unfold as they do. Rather than seeing themselves as co-creators of the organization’s success, many feed upon the idea that management already has all the answers and is “holding out on them” in some important and harmful ways, or that leadership is inept for not fully charting the course before beginning a new initiative.



## Telework guide for managers urges a focus on results

October 24, 2005 By Daniel Pulliam [dpulliam@govexec.com](mailto:dpulliam@govexec.com)

The managers of employees working away from the office should focus on results and communicating with workers to maintain productivity, according to a new guide for implementing telework in the workplace.

Federal managers and supervisors should set objectives and expectations and avoid relying on observation to gauge a teleworker's performance, recommends "Implementing and Managing a Telework Program: A Complete Guide to Properly Managing Telework Employees."

Produced by the Viack Corp., a Scottsdale, Ariz.-based company that sells a product enabling workers to collaborate online, the 17-page guide gives managers advice on determining who should telework, breaking cultural barriers, choosing the right technologies and securing information technology systems from attacks.

"As more managers learn how to develop and successfully implement policies for remote workers, we expect the number of teleworkers to jump exponentially," said Amy Fadida, Viack's senior vice president. "Fortunately, there's actually little difference between managing the performance of a teleworker and managing the employee who works at the main office."

Federal agencies are facing congressional pressure to increase the number of employees who work away from the office. Five agencies are currently facing budget cuts if teleworking is not made available to eligible employees.

Studies have demonstrated that increasing the number of teleworkers would ease the demand for gasoline, lowering fuel prices and lessening rush hour traffic. Advocates of

telework say it also could help agencies continue normal operations in times of disaster.

The guide recommends that employees working away from the office have easy access to a computer, the Internet, an e-mail program, a telephone and a fax machine. Other means of communicating with colleagues and management that are helpful but not as important are Web cameras, headsets, instant messaging programs and online white boards.

Companies that allow employees to work from home often overlook security issues, the guide states. The growing popularity of wireless networks both at the office and at home is adding new security concerns. "Potential vulnerabilities are endless," the guide notes.

The guide makes seven recommendations for steps managers should take before moving forward with a long-term telework program, including:

- Establish a method for determining who should be allowed to telework.
- Set clear guidelines for employees working away from the office.
- Determine the technological needs of both potential telecommuters and the agency.
- Establish a method for keeping managers informed of employees' status.
- Ensure that teleworkers and non-teleworkers are managed uniformly.
- Pledge to judge all employees by results and not observation.
- Determine an appropriate way for managers to evaluate results.



## **Thousands of volunteer feds staff Katrina relief effort**

By Daniel Pulliam [dpulliam@govexec.com](mailto:dpulliam@govexec.com)

The number of federal employees who left their day-to-day jobs to volunteer in Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts has surpassed 7,500 and the Federal Emergency Management Agency continues to receive offers from civil servants interested in lending a hand.

"We're still using [the volunteers] and we're still getting more people calling," said FEMA spokeswoman Mary Margaret Walker.

The volunteer count is from all federal agencies, including the Homeland Security Department, Walker said. She said that it took three days to compile the number for *Government Executive*, as a comprehensive count was not readily available.

FEMA officials "were still in the 'Oh my God, let's get people there quick' type mode," said Homeland Security Department spokesman Larry Orluskie. "I don't know if there was somebody counting beans as much as they were just trying to get people down there."

Former FEMA Director Michael Brown sent a formal request for 2,000 DHS volunteers to department Secretary Michael Chertoff on Aug. 29. After contacting FEMA's Human Resource Operations Branch, employees able to volunteer were sent to either Atlanta for community relations training or Orlando for all other kinds of training.

Volunteers were to be sent to a disaster joint field office when conditions were safe and they had completed training, Brown's request stated.

According to the request, it was "beneficial" for FEMA to seek volunteers from within DHS, for efficiency reasons. Employees from the department already had been subject to background investigations and had travel cards and badges, eliminating the normal delay experienced when preparing a surge workforce.

Ultimately, though, FEMA accepted some volunteers from outside the department. The agency could not provide a breakdown of how many of the 7,500 federal volunteers came from the Homeland Security Department versus other agencies. Officials also could not say which agency sent the most volunteers.

The U.S. Fire Administration is one example of an agency that was able to send a number of volunteers, FEMA said. Fire Administration employees

performed community relations work, including door-to-door distribution of flyers containing updates on the situation.

But some Homeland Security employees who contacted *Government Executive* said they were unable to assist.

Joanne Knight, a Customs and Border Protection mission support specialist at the Albuquerque-El Paso Air Branch, said she and two other employees expressed interest to their director, who forwarded her name to the agency's Washington headquarters. But she never heard back.

"I asked to volunteer, but was not given the opportunity to do so," Knight said. "I wish I had a story to share with you."

A number of non-Homeland Security employees contacting *Government Executive* said they were disappointed that employees from other agencies weren't asked by Brown to assist in the recovery.

Don Alexander, a systems accountant with a Small Business Administration office in Denver, said his military service in Southeast Asia and construction experience would have given him a unique ability to assist in the recovery efforts.

Melissa Pickworth, a Government Accountability Office employee, said she went through the condensed American Red Cross disaster training but has yet to be deployed. She said she also tried to volunteer in the Washington area but never received a call back.

Pickworth said her experience trying to volunteer has prompted her to take a long-term approach and get involved with the Red Cross' National Capital Area Chapter. She has started a series of disaster services classes to gain more knowledge and skills so she'll be ready to help in the event another opportunity arises.

Bernard Schack, a Veterans Affairs Department project engineer, said his agency put out a request for volunteers about two weeks ago after some employees in the disaster region were deployed to assist in relief efforts.

Now that there has been a departmentwide request for volunteers, Schack said there is a high probability that he will lend a hand.

*Taken from GovExec.com e-newsletter Nov.4, 2005*



## Personal Development

### 6 easy steps to get you where you want to go without the stress

Reprinted from PA Times, October 2005 edition

The comment I hear most frequently from business people is that they feel overwhelmed with work, and are often playing the game of “catch up”.

But there is a way to get it all done without being overwhelmed. You are probably thinking, “but you don’t understand—all the phone calls, on the spot decisions, immediate tasks.”

But I do understand. These are the realities of business.

However, a little preplanning and goal setting can ease the daily pressures and find you additional time each day—as much as an hour—and relieve a whole lot of stress.

It boils down to you being more in control of how your day goes, and not being controlled by the situations that hit you.

- ★ Identifying and writing down your goals, short and long term, is the beginning. You may already have done this, but how do you accomplish them in a timely manner?
- ★ Scheduling your time is the next step. The question is then, how do you plan your time to accomplish goals when you are under the gun with crises, deadlines and interruptions?
- ★ Start with a daily “to do” list, which identifies the uncompleted tasks required to meet each goal.
- ★ Next, prioritize those tasks in order of which must be accomplished first. We sometimes are so caught up in the urgent matters of the day, that we fail to schedule time to undertake the important tasks that

will lead us to our goals.

- ★ Allot time each day to address these tasks, in the form of blocks of quiet time, at least one hour, to work these tasks, and to plan.
- ★ Find the most creative and productive time for you and use this time wisely. Let phone calls go to voice mail to be returned later.
- ★ This time is an appointment you make with yourself, and treat as any other business commitment. It gives you the sense of being in control of where you are going, and that you are taking the positive steps to get there.
- ★ If circumstances arise that infringe on your quiet time, and surely at some time they will, reschedule for later in the day. You will soon realize the importance of having this quiet time.
- ★ Take 10 minutes at the end of each day to plan for tomorrow. Identify and prioritize tasks necessary to reach your goals on a daily “to do” list.

However, be careful not to commit every minute, but allow flexibility for the unexpected and urgent events that surely will occur, and it also allows you to reschedule your quiet time if necessary.

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*Carol Halsey is Founder of Business Organizing Solutions. She is a professional organizer, consultant, speaker, and author. You can get articles, ideas and time-saving tips simply by visiting her web site: [www.PilesToFiles.com](http://www.PilesToFiles.com). Sign up for her free organizing newsletter, “Organizing Ideas,” sent twice each month.*



## 10 Simple Conversation Starters

Taken from Highest-Vision.com Oct05

Do you believe that leadership today is less about having the right answers and more about having the right questions? The next time you see an opportunity for a meaningful dialogue in your organization, consider posing one of these questions to get the conversation started. Include everyone you can in the process. (In large organizations it helps to host groups that are comprised of both participants who have and do not have formal authority, and to keep each group small enough for genuine dialogue to occur.)

1. What stories about leadership are told within our organization? What different perspectives exist?
2. How can we ensure that everyone feels like a valued contributor to our shared success?
3. How can we invite people to act upon their right and their responsibility to be a fully participating member of the organization?
4. What will entice people to contribute their own knowledge and experience?
5. How can leadership be exhibited by every person in our organization?
6. What will it take to create relationships where people ask for your ideas and offer you theirs?
7. How can we make sure that information and ideas are flowing freely?
8. What is needed to ensure that decisions are able to be made as close to the front line as possible?
9. What can leaders do to challenge the myths and invite forth everyone's full participation?
10. What can staff members do to challenge the myths and invite forth everyone's full participation?

### Conclusion:

We are convinced that everyone—those who are already in roles that include formal authority, as well as those who aren't—could benefit from spending time in a leadership role that comes *without a budget or people to "command."* We can't imagine a better way to have people experience the demands of trying to accomplish something through the joint efforts of many people, or a better opportunity to learn how to foster relationships and discover the value of shared successes. As our organizations increase in size and complexity, "quality of life" issues gain attention, and our businesses continue to shape the world in ever greater ways, successful companies must actively engage *every member* of their teams in both formal and informal ways.

So what can you do to move beyond the myths of leadership discussed here? Begin by recognizing that if you wait for someone else to take the first step—no steps are taken. With or without formal authority, find your voice and use it well. Ask provocative questions that invite open discussion and the sharing of ideas. Risk joining the conversation and shouldering the responsibility for what we create together.

*Make a habit of generating many ideas and options. Usually getting an idea we think will work stops us from considering alternative ideas.* —Robert Fritz



## UPCOMING EVENTS December

<b>Dec 1, 2005</b> 11:30 a.m.	<b>Federal Transfer Center's Community Relation Committee Mtg</b>
<b>Dec 1, 2005</b>	<b>World Aids Day</b>
<b>Dec 2, 2005</b> 12:00 noon	<b>Naturalization</b> 200 NW 4 <sup>th</sup> St. POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167
<b>Dec 9, 2005</b> Morning	<b>Agency Visits-Enid</b> POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167
<b>Dec 10, 2005</b>	<b>Human Rights Day</b>
<b>Dec 14, 2005</b> 7:30 a.m.	<b>Mayor's Committee on Disability Concerns</b> POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167
<b>Dec 15, 2005</b>	<b>Bill of Rights Day</b>
<b>Dec 16, 2005</b> 11:00 a.m.	<b>Federal Employees Care Council</b> POC: Tom Burton, 405-954-0625
<b>Dec 21, 2005</b> 10:00 a.m.	<b>Interagency Training Council</b> POC: Sherri Beasley, 405-231-5854
<b>Dec 21, 2005</b>	<b>Black Program Council</b> Allegiance Credit Union POC: Rick Romain, 405-553-8873
<b>Dec 22, 2005</b>	<b>Winter Solstice</b>
<b>Dec 25, 2005</b>	<b>Christmas</b>
<b>Dec 26, 2005</b>	<b>First day of Hanukkah</b>
<b>Dec 26, 2005</b>	<b>Kwanzaa</b>
<b>Dec 31, 2005</b> All Evening	<b>Opening Night-OKC</b> FECC coordinates volunteers for the New Year's Eve celebration – OKC Registration form on page 11

*If a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts, but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties.*  
—Francis Bacon



*The greatest object in the universe, says a certain philosopher, is a good man struggling with adversity; yet there is still a greater, which is the good man that comes to relieve it.*  
—Oliver Goldsmith

## Your Federal Executive Board

*"Federal Executive Boards (FEBs) are generally responsible for improving coordination among federal activities and programs in...areas outside of Washington, D.C...FEBs support and promote national initiatives of the President and the administration and respond to the local needs of the federal agencies and the community." (GAO-04-384)*

*We applaud the efforts of the Oklahoma FEB Executive Policy Council members who ensure information is provided to direct our activities and efforts:*

- Jim Akagi, US Drug Enforcement Administration
- Ron Berryhill, Director, USDA Risk Management Agency
- Michael Diehl, Administrator, Southwestern Power Administration, Tulsa
- Col Dean Despinoy, Commander, 507<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing
- Steve Gentling, Director, VA Medical Center
- Bill Fillman, Director, VA Central Area, Muskogee
- Larry Flener, Representative for the District Director, US Postal Service
- Dottie Overal, Director, Small Business Administration
- Patti Ford, Director of Staff, Tinker AFB
- Lindy Ritz, Director, FAA Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center

This newsletter is published monthly as a cost-effective tool for communicating events and issues of importance to the federal community in Oklahoma. If you have news of interest, please fax to the FEB Office at (405) 231-4165 or email to [LeAnnJenkins@juno.com](mailto:LeAnnJenkins@juno.com) no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

### Elected Officers:

**Chair:** **Mike Roach**, U.S. Marshal  
US Marshals Service  
Western District of Oklahoma

**Vice-Chair:** **Kevin McNeely**  
OKC Field Office Director  
US Department of Housing and  
Urban Development

### Staff:

**Director:** LeAnn Jenkins  
**Assistant:** Trish Plowman  
**Program Support:** Constance Ward

*Please feel free to copy this newsletter & distribute. The newsletter is available on our website, <http://www.oklahoma.feb.gov> where you can also request to receive it electronically.*



## WHEN TO SAY WHEN: Keeping the holiday season in perspective

Government Leader, November 2005

By Jason Miller

The holiday decorations spring up at department stores earlier and earlier each year—reminding you it’s that time of year again. And at the office, it’s no different.

It will soon be time for the endless agency and industry parties, the grab-bag luncheon with co-workers and the nonstop supply of sweets that arrive in your office.

But whether you’re filled with holiday cheer or jeer, the “happiest time of the year” can be a juggling act that could help advance your career or leave you answering questions from your agency’s inspector general.

You have to know how to avoid the potential trouble that seemingly innocent gifts or party invitations can bring.

Here are some survival tips from former and current career federal employees and political appointees on how to make it through the holiday season in one piece.

No excuses. Every agency gives employees a handbook on ethics, and most ethics officers or general counsels send out a memo in November reminding employees what they can and can’t do. While the rules are not always consistent from one agency to another, according to one long-time former fed, you should know where your agency draws the line. Certain agencies, such as the Justice Department or the White House, are more sensitive about where employees go and what they do. Then again, as one administration official said jokingly, “No one invites someone from the Office of Management and Budget to their party anyway.”

If in doubt, ask. If you are invited to an event and are not sure if it fits under the rules, it’s better to be safe than sorry—ask your agency’s ethics officer. While many events probably are OK, you don’t want to just assume you can go and risk getting into hot water.

Perception is reality. Even if you get the go-ahead to attend an event or accept a gift, how it is perceived in the community is very important. Don’t go to an event or accept a gift from a

vendor who has unresolved business with your office, such as a request for proposals or a contract protest. While association events usually are OK, company parties need to be considered more closely. You don’t want to be accused of favoring one company over another by attending a party because it just happened to fit into your schedule.

Mind your manners. Proper etiquette is essential at parties. We are not talking about Emily Post here, but you should understand that office parties or those at private organizations with political appointees tend to be more reserved and your actions will be under the microscope. Don’t tell politically incorrect jokes or gorge at the buffet. If you want to drink more than moderately, do so with only trusted friends and remember the potential consequences. You don’t want to get caught jumping into the Tidal Basin like former Rep. Wilbur Mills (D-Ohio) did with a stripper named Fannie Fox.

Share and share alike. Many vendors like to send chocolate or cakes as gifts. It’s best if you put them in a centrally located place in the office so everyone can share the goodies. Food usually is the safest gift, followed by personalized holiday cards and a small, personalized or homemade present. If you get any gifts outside the acceptable range—identified by a strict dollar amount—return them or give them to your agency’s ethics officer, where they become property of the government. Always err on the side of caution. All the experts pointed out that no gift is worth your job.

Yoga, meditation, vacation. Balance is the important thing during this time of year. Take some time for family, friends and, especially, for yourself. The office usually is quiet, so it’s a good time to clean out old files or catch up on work that you’ve been putting off. And remember, you can say no to a holiday invitation, but do it gracefully.



# Seeking Federal Volunteers

## Opening Night 2006, Oklahoma City (New Year's Eve, 2005)



It is that time of year to celebrate the ringing in of a new year. This year's event is shaping up to be an exciting event. Over the past several years, the federal community has played a large role in the success of Oklahoma City's official New Year's Eve party "Opening Night".

We are soliciting for volunteers and would appreciate agencies posting this or distributing to your employees. If you wish to volunteer simply contact your agency coordinator listed below or email your request to michael.b.birdsong@irs.gov

*Our volunteers will be Button Checkers. Button Checkers are assigned to public entrances of each venue to ensure attendees are wearing admission buttons, assist in crowd control for the building, and assist the public regarding locations to purchase buttons and other venues.*

A list of volunteers, along with times and locations that volunteers are needed are as follows:

### First National Center, 120 N. Robinson (6 volunteers each shift)

<b>Site Manager:</b>	Tom Burton-FAA	954-0625
<b>Button Checkers (6:30-9:15pm)</b>		
<b>Button Checkers (9:00-11:45pm)</b>		

### Chase Bank, 100 N. Broadway (6-8 volunteers each shift)

<b>Site Manager:</b>	Susie Carter-VA	297-5965
<b>Button Checkers (6:30-9:15pm)</b>		
<b>Button Checkers (9:00-11:45pm)</b>		

### Cox Business Center, 1 Myriad Garden (6-8 volunteers each shift)

<b>Site Manager:</b>	Steve England-IRS for 3 days	297-4316
<b>Button Checkers (6:30-9:15pm)</b>		
<b>Button Checkers (9:00-11:45pm)</b>		

Tinker Cathey Thompson 405-734-4693

VA Susie Carter 405-297-5965

FAA Tom Burton 405-954-0625

IRS Mike Birdsong 405-297-4014

USGS Lyn Osburn 405-810-4413

NWS Liz Quoetone 405-573-3407

FHWA Kathy Quinn 405-605-6011

HUD Luciann Whitthorne 405-609-8586

FTC Tina Broderson 405-680-4040

Allegiance Credit Union Terri Shaw 789-7900 x2245



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
	DECEMBER			<b>1</b> FTC Community Relations Mtg	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> 11:00 FECC	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 10:00 ITC 3:30 BPC	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> Christmas	<b>26</b> Hanukkah/Kwanza	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Opening Night!

OKLAHOMA FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD  
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 OFFICIAL BUSINESS ONLY

We wish to thank the FAA Franchise Print shop for their monthly assistance in the duplication and distribution of this newsletter.