



INTERAGENCY CONNECTION

215 Dean A. McGee, Suite 320, Oklahoma City, OK 73102

<http://www.oklahoma.feb.gov/>

(405) 231-4167

Chair's Corner



The Oklahoma Federal Executive Board's annual report is now available on our local FEB website: www.oklahoma.feb.gov.

The report has an Executive Summary page that provides the overall statement of difference, while the narrative portion of the report provides background on how the cost avoidance and economic impact were determined.

Our Shared Neutrals Program and coordinated Leadership Training events resulted in more than \$1 million in cost avoidance for federal agencies in Oklahoma.

FEB coordinated volunteerism opportunities, federal blood drives, computer donations to schools and Combined Federal Campaign donations provided more than \$8 million in economic impact for Oklahoma.

While these figures are conservative, they illustrate the value of our Federal Executive Board, not only to the federal agencies within Oklahoma, but to our respective communities.

I had an opportunity to talk about these efficiencies at recent meeting of the Deputy Chief Human Capital Officers for the various agency headquarters.

We were asked to provide a briefing about Federal Executive Boards. Awareness is always a struggle for FEBs, since so many people do not know what an "FEB" is, or what

it does. There is no FEB in Washington, DC, making this a perfect forum in which to provide information!

During the meeting,

- Paula Bridgham, Director of FEB Programs at the Office of Personnel Management provided an historical perspective of FEBs and how they have operated for 46 years, supporting each Administration's objectives and initiatives in their respective regional and field locations;
- LeAnn Jenkins gave a briefing from the FEB perspective, providing examples of how FEBs implemented national initiatives in 28 different geographic locations (the number of FEBs); and
- As Chair of the Oklahoma FEB, I provided information on FEBs from an Agency perspective and the value of participating in FEB activities. I enjoyed the opportunity to brag on our FEB and all that you help accomplish!

I want to thank all of you that contribute to the success of our Federal Executive Board and encourage you to review the annual report to see the fruits of your labor.

Mike Roach, Chairman

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Planning the Training Menu—What’s for Lunch?

It takes a well-balanced training strategy to support organizational and employee goals.

Have you ever stood at a salad bar, paralyzed with indecision? It’s easy to be overwhelmed by options. We cannot eat everything and sometimes need help making good choices—without putting too much on our plates. Federal employees face similar choices when asked to select training from an enormous menu of workshops, courses and seminars. MSPB’s Merit Principles Survey (MPS) 2005 shows that most Federal employees are smart eaters—63% are getting the training they need to do their jobs. But many employees—48percent—are also hungry for more training to help fine-tune their performance. How should they choose their next training experiences? We offer three suggestions:

Avoid sweets. Like a plate full of dessert, training that is merely “fun” leaves participants entertained, but malnourished. It does not help them better contribute to their agency’s mission—or advance in their careers. Often training courses are described superficially, based only on how much participants enjoyed them. Supervisors and their employees should weigh the value of the training by what it brings to the individual and organization rather than by previous participants’ taste for the training process. In turn, training vendors can support healthy training choices by emphasizing training content and objectives—and any data showing an impact on job performance.

Load up on essential vitamins. Whether it comes from a needs analysis survey, supervisor feedback, or personal reflection, information about an employee’s “skills gap” is valuable. Any time an employee lacks critical skills, some of the employee’s training should include “loading up” on training that addresses weaknesses. When asked about their strategy for selected training, 67 percent of MPS 2005 survey participants said they plan to close a gap in their current skills set. This targeted use of training is likely to help both these employees and their agencies increase employee performance.

But even a good strategy should not be over-

indulged. Not every skill gap can be usefully addressed through training because the same training is not equally digestible by every employee. Some aspects of job performance are closely tied to the aptitude an employee brings to the job. When the employee lacks necessary underlying ability, training will produce little improvement. Even when a skill is trainable, there also must be priorities. When an employee has demonstrated gaps in many trainable areas, not all should be targeted at once by training.

Select for long-term nutritional value. While gap-driven training can reduce weaknesses, employees need to save room on their plate for building strengths. Not only may this be more motivating to employees, but it has greater potential for long-term contribution to agency performance. While the outcome of gap-filling is an *adequate* employee, the outcome of strength-building is a *superior* employee. At the team level, a gap-filling strategy produces a set of interchangeable employees with similar skills and skill levels. A strength-building strategy, on the other hand, can create an interdependent team with greater skill diversity and greater synergy. Fortunately, almost 72 percent of participants include strength-building in their strategy for future training opportunities.

The MPS 2005 results indicate that 55 percent of Federal employees are pursuing both gap-filling and strength-building strategies as they consume the training they need to increase performance in their current jobs—a balanced training meal. This balance of short-term and long-term perspectives, of the immediate requirements of the job and the long-term development of the employee who performs the job, is appropriate. We encourage all employees to consider the benefits of both strategies as they work with their supervisors to fill their—and their agency’s—training needs.

Taken from Issues of Merit, January 2007, a publication of the US Merit Systems Protection Board, Office of Policy & Evaluation



Spotlighting Information in Public Service

Did You Know...

The Federal Executive Board sponsored "Shared Neutrals" Program was recently nominated for the coveted John R. McCune V, Volunteer Mediator of the Year award. The Administrative Office of the Oklahoma Supreme Court gives this award each year to recognize quality, dedication, professionalism and community involvement for the peaceful and efficient resolution of all types of conflict within the workplace and community, and for the advancement of mediation and other forms of alternative dispute resolution in Oklahoma.

Normally, the nominees are individual volunteer mediators. This year the entire "Shared Neutrals" program was nominated by the Director of the Early Settlement Central, Mr. Phil Johnson. His recommendation read in part "...The **Shared Neutrals**, federal employees, group has given a tremendous amount of their personal time to mediate for the Central program this past year. There are currently over twenty (20) active shared neutral volunteer mediators who are mediating small claims, family cases, permanency, and other types of cases. The shared neutrals are truly a community volunteers who model mediation in both their community and as a mediator. Their willingness to serve is to be commended," Phil Johnson, Director, commented, "Thank you, **Shared Neutrals**, for working to make Oklahoma a more "peaceful" state."

Accepting the nomination and Certificate on behalf of the FEB "Shared Neutrals" Program at the 12th annual Volunteers Conference was Lamar Wilson, Oklahoma National Guard and Cynthia Hagood, VA Medical Center.

The "Shared Neutrals" Program was developed in response to a goal of the Oklahoma Federal Executive Board to reduce costs and improve efficiency for its members.

The "Shared Neutrals" Program provides mediation as an alternative to resolve disputes in the federal workplace. The shared resources of the Oklahoma federal community form this program comprised of mediators from our federal agencies in five different geographic areas of the state. As recognized by this nomination, many of our Shared Neutrals continue their mediation practice by volunteering as mediators for Oklahoma Early Settlement Program throughout our state.



In attendance from Shared Neutrals: Steve Giroux, IRS (retired); Phil Johnson, Early Settlement Central, Mildred Payton, IRS; Lamar Wilson, Oklahoma National Guard

The FEB Director LeAnn Jenkins initiated this mediation effort in 1998 with the training resources within the Oklahoma State Supreme Court, most notably Sue Tate, Director ADRS Administrative Office of the Courts and the support of federal leaders in Oklahoma. Connie Ward, in the F.E.B. office has coordinated the Shared Neutrals Program for the past few years. The efforts of numerous federal employees who make this program work well throughout Oklahoma were instrumental in achieving this year's recognition.

Article submitted by Stephen Giroux, IRS (retired) and Shared Neutral since 1998.



Leadership FEB



A local approach developed by the **Federal Executive Board of Oklahoma** to Advance Creative Management Skills and Enhance Leadership Abilities

Who Should Attend? This program is developed for Executives, Senior Managers, and aspiring leaders who are interested in exploring unusual perspectives in solution development and leadership challenges. Success for each participant will be determined by his or her level of interaction throughout the program.

Cost to the Agency: The registration fee is \$750 per participant, in addition to the eight working days required. This covers *Leadership FEB* program expenses for each forum, five leadership books, parking fees for designated forums, and other materials. Personal expenses, lodging, and mileage are not included in this cost.

Name: _____

Agency: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____

In order to maximize the benefits and expand the cohesive networking opportunities, no alternates will be authorized to attend single sessions. However, if an identified participant becomes unable to honor their commitment to the program, the employing agency is authorized to replace that individual for the duration of the program.

In order to ensure maximum benefit to the participants, each Leadership FEB class will be limited to 20 participants.

Agency Head Review/Approval Date

Register as early as possible to reserve a slot for your participant, no later than Friday, March 2, 2007. Cancellations will be processed at no charge to the agency through that date. After March 2, 2007, we ask the agency to honor their obligation due to cost incurred; however, a substitute is authorized and encouraged.

Agency/Registrant may pay by cash, check, credit card, or government voucher. Please submit the registration form:

By mail: Federal Executive Board 215 Dean A. McGee, Ste 320 Oklahoma City, OK 73102	By fax: (405) 231-4165
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GOVEXEC.COM

OPM launches online management competency tool

By Brittany R. Ballenstedt bballenstedt@govexec.com 2-6-07

The Office of Personnel Management on Tuesday unveiled a Web-based instrument for assessing the skill levels of federal managers, supervisors, team leaders, and others in key areas of leadership and performance management.

The launch comes exactly one week after OPM released the agency-specific results of its Federal Human Capital Survey which assessed federal employees' perceptions of their jobs and views on management challenges.

OPM officials briefed agencies on Tuesday about the benefits of using the management system. The personnel agency's goal is to help agencies that currently do not have leadership competency models or assessment instruments to assess their proficiency in leadership management.

The online tool is designed to support human capital efforts in succession management, leadership competency gap closure, leadership development, and recruitment and retention. Additionally, OPM officials said the tool will assess agencies' readiness to manage in a pay-for-performance environment.

The new tool is based on a five-level scale going from awareness to expert, allowing managers to conduct a self assessment based on twenty eight leadership and six performance management competencies. It also allows supervisors to look over the results to determine strengths and areas for improvement.

OPM expects the system to serve as a roadmap of the qualification requirements employees should follow to progress to senior executive jobs.

The system is not mandatory, but will be available to all agencies wishing to participate. Agencies choosing to use the system will meet with OPM over the next couple of months.

GSA Expo, May 15-17, 2007

The General Services Administration will host its 13th International Products and Services Expo in Orlando, Florida, May 15 – 17, 2007. I would like to personally invite you, and other Federal Executive Board members, to attend this event. This combination trade show and training exposition will have over 700 commercial partners, all GSA Multiple Award Schedule contract holders. These individuals will not only display their products and services, but will be available to discuss technical issues as well.

Admission is Free! There will be more than 200 hours of FREE training courses offered to attendees on use of GSA Schedules, GSA Advantage!® (our on-line ordering system), e-Buy, use of the government purchase and travel cards, mandatory sources (NIB/NISH) and the attendees can earn Continuous Learning Points (CLPs). As you know, the changing logistics environment has made it essential that military and federal personnel, possess certain knowledge of these functions if mission support is to be sustained.

I would like to encourage you and your acquisition personnel to attend this exciting event. As an added bonus, free meeting space is available at the Expo if you are interested in hosting an internal meeting in conjunction with the Expo. Specific information relative to the meeting space, various training classes and times, area hotels, free on-line registration, etc., can be found at our website www.expo.gsa.gov. However, should you have any questions about the Expo or any other GSA issue, please call Melinda Wagoner at (404) 331-9662.

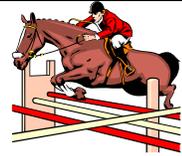
I look forward to seeing you in Orlando.

Sincerely,

Edwin Fielder
Regional Administrator
Southeast Sunbelt Region



One-Day Pre-Retirement Training Seminar



<p>CSRS session topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Overview of CSRS ➤ Survivor Benefit ➤ Thrift Savings Plan ➤ Voluntary Contribution Program ➤ Federal Employee Health & Life Insurance Programs ➤ Social Security ➤ Flexible Spending Accounts 	<p>FERS session topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Overview of FERS ➤ Survivor Benefit ➤ Thrift Savings Plan ➤ Voluntary Contribution Program ➤ Federal Employee Health & Life Insurance Programs ➤ Social Security ➤ Flexible Spending Accounts
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TIME: 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (each day) Registration will begin at 8:00am
LOCATION: Metro Tech, 1900 Springlake Drive, Oklahoma City (Alpine/Calypso Rooms)
COST: [] \$85.00 per person if registered by close of business 2/22/2007
[] \$95.00 per person if registered after close of business 2/22/2007
[] \$45.00 for spouses (if materials are shared)

[] I am registering for the CSRS Only session on Wednesday, March 14, 2007.

[] I am registering for the FERS Only session on Thursday, March 15, 2007.

Seating is limited to 80 per session. Once a session is filled, future registrants will be notified and provided the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list for the next Pre-Retirement session.

NAME(S): _____
List name of employee and spouse on same form to receive the discounted price for spouse

AGENCY: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: () _____ FAX: () _____

Agency/Registrant may pay by [] cash, [] check, [] credit card or [] government voucher.

Mail this registration form to:	Oklahoma Federal Executive Board 215 Dean A. McGee, Suite 320 Oklahoma City, OK 73102
or fax to:	(405) 231-4165

Cancellation Policy: Understanding that unforeseen circumstances may preclude an individual from attending, refunds and cancellations will be permitted through February 23, 2007. However, after that date, registrations must be honored by the individual or agency involved. If you are unable to attend, substitute attendees are authorized and encouraged!



Retirement Systems Modernization

Welcome,

Over the next 10 years, 60% of people in the Federal workforce will be eligible to retire. More than likely, 40% of these individuals will retire when they are first eligible. How is OPM proactively preparing for the increased number and complexity of retirement applications expected across the Federal Government? How is OPM responding to increased customer demand for online, self-service tools that support retirement? The answer lies in our efforts with the Retirement Systems Modernization (RSM) Program.



The RSM program will transform retirement by devising more efficient and effective business systems to answer to increased customer demand for higher levels of customer service and online self-service tools.

New web based tools will be available on-demand for federal employees to plan early for their retirement. System operators will have secure access to federal employees' and annuitants' information in the system, allowing for enhanced retirement and post-retirement counseling. The automation of claims processing will be done more efficiently, consistently, and provide federal employees and annuitants access to their retirement information not previously available.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the RSM website. I invite you to take a look through the information we have today and encourage you to use it as a one-stop resource for RSM news and information.

OPM will go-live with its new retirement system in February, 2008. Please look for additional updates to this web site as we transform our capabilities to better serve our customers.

Sincerely,

Linda Springer
Director, OPM

U.S. Office of Personnel Management 1900 E Street NW, Washington, DC 20415 | (202) 606-1800 | TTY (202) 606-2532

To learn more about the Retirement Systems Modernization, visit OPM's website with Frequently Asked Questions, and the timeline of when agencies will be incorporated: <http://www.opm.gov/rsm/index.asp>



New Requirements for Travelers

Under the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI): The proposed implementation timeline has two phases:

- Beginning **January 23, 2007**, ALL persons, including U.S. citizens, traveling by **air** between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda will be required to present a valid passport, Air NEXUS card, or U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Document, or an Alien Registration Card, Form I-551, if applicable.
- As early as **January 1, 2008**, ALL persons, including U.S. citizens, traveling between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda by **land or sea** (including ferries), may be required to present a valid passport or other documents as determined by the Department of Homeland Security. While recent legislative changes permit a later deadline, the Departments of State and Homeland Security are working to meet all requirements as soon as possible. Ample advance notice will be provided to enable the public to obtain passports or passport cards for land/sea entries.

The passport requirement does NOT apply to U.S. citizens traveling to or returning directly from a U.S. territory. U.S. citizens returning directly from a U.S. territory are not considered to have left the United States and do not need to present a passport. U.S. territories include the following: Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Swains Island, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Travel Documents for U.S. Citizens Under WHTI: Under the proposed implementation plan, the following documents will be acceptable to fulfill document requirements:

- **U.S. Passport:** U.S. citizens may present a valid U.S. passport when traveling via air between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda, and may also use a U.S. passport when traveling via sea and land borders (including ferry crossings).
- **The Passport Card** (also referred to as the PASS Card): This limited-use passport in card format is currently under development and will be available for use for travel only via land or sea (including ferries) between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda. Similar in size to a credit card, it will fit easily into a wallet.
- DOS and DHS also anticipate that the following documents will continue to be acceptable for their current travel uses under WHTI: **SENTRI, NEXUS, FAST, and the U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Document.** As proposed, members of the U.S. Armed Forces on active duty traveling on orders will continue to be exempt from the passport requirement.

Background

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 requires the Department of Homeland Security and Department of State to develop and implement a plan to require all travelers, U.S. citizens and foreign nationals alike, to present a passport or other document, or a combination of documents, that denote identity and citizenship when entering the United States. Congress amended portions of the Act in 2006. The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative is the Administration's proposed plan to implement this mandate.

The goal of the Initiative is to strengthen border security and facilitate entry into the United States for U.S. citizens and legitimate foreign visitors by providing standardized, secure and reliable documentation which will allow the Department of Homeland Security to quickly, reliably and accurately identify a traveler.



FEEA 2007- 08 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

PLEASE CHECK THE BOXES TO ENSURE YOUR APPLICATION PACKAGE IS COMPLETE:

- This FEEA Scholarship Application Form:** A photocopy of the scholarship application form is acceptable.
- Essay:** Typed, double-spaced, essay **not exceeding two pages** on the topic: **The Federal Government is always looking for bright young people who will choose to make public service a career. Come up with a slogan and explain your marketing strategy to recruit more people to government service.**
- Written Recommendation/Character Reference:** Please submit a written recommendation/character reference from a supervisor, coworker, community leader, teacher or counselor. **Must be submitted with application package.**
- Transcript:** The transcript must show a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. An official transcript is not required; photocopies of transcripts are acceptable. Report cards are acceptable for Fall 2006 grades.
High School Seniors: Submit full high school career transcript that includes fall 2006 grades.
College Freshmen: Submit a transcript that verifies at least a 3.0 for the fall 2006 semester.
Applicants not currently enrolled: Submit a transcript from the last school attended.
All other applicants: Submit full post-secondary career transcripts that include fall 2006 grades.
- Check here** if your transcript is being mailed directly by the school. Transcripts must be postmarked by the application deadline of March 30, 2007. **It is the responsibility of the student to ensure separately mailed transcripts arrive on time.** An official transcript is not required; photocopies of transcripts are acceptable.
- List and Briefly Describe Awards, Extracurricular and Community Service Activities:** Please provide this list on a separate page. Provide enough information so that the scholarship review committee will understand your accomplishments.
Include relevant dates and average time spent at each activity.
- Copy of ACT, SAT or Other Examination Scores:** This is required for applicants who are high school seniors; optional for all other applicants.
- Copy of Most Recent Standard Form 50 "Notice of Personnel Action."** Form must be **no older than January 2005.**
**If applicant is a federal employee, submit the employee's own form. *If applicant is a dependent of a federal employee, then the sponsoring employee's form should be submitted. *If a current SF-50 is not available you must submit a current pay stub and a letter from personnel identifying your duty station, grade and service comp. date.*
- Two Self-addressed, Stamped, #10 Business-size Envelopes with 39 cents First Class Postage Properly Affixed.** We will use the first to acknowledge receipt of your application and the second to provide results of the competition.

Do not fold or bind any pages with staples or paper clips.

Place all materials, unfolded, into a 9 x 12 in. (or larger) envelope postmarked no later than **March 30, 2007.**

MAIL TO: FEEA Scholarship Program, 8441 W. Bowles Ave., Suite 200, Littleton, CO 80123-9501

Please complete the following. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Applicant's Name: _____
 Complete Home Address: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 Social Security #: _____
 Home Telephone #: _____
 E-mail Address: _____

Federal Employee's Name: _____
 Relationship to Applicant: Father Mother Spouse Self Other (specify) _____

Federal Employee's Work Tel. #: _____ Length of Federal Employment: _____
 Federal Agency Name: _____ Duty Station: _____
 Federal Employee's E-mail Address: _____

Applicant's Unweighted Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA): *(must be 3.0 or higher on 4.0 scale)*

College/University (attending or planning to attend):

Class Status as of Fall term 2007 (must be at least a college freshman by fall term 2007):

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate Student



LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR DEVELOPING WORKFORCE RESILIENCY



How to Increase Resiliency in Yourself, Your Work Teams, & Your Agency

Workforce resiliency in the public sector is more essential than ever. The pressure is on to get more work done, of higher quality, in less time, with fewer people, and a reduced budget, while managing non-stop change. In this highly rated session, Dr. Al Siebert draws on decades of consulting, thirty years experience teaching management psychology, and his knowledge of highly resilient survivors to show how to sustain personal resiliency and develop a resilient workforce.

Date: Tuesday, March 27, 2007	Location: OKC Public Works Training Room 3738 SW 15 th Street
Time: 7:30 a.m. Registration	8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Training

Executives and Managers will learn:

- How to be resilient and bring stability to uncertainty. Basics of a personal plan for avoiding resiliency fatigue and holding up under pressure. Guidelines for holding meetings during emotional times.
- Why some people are more resilient than others. How to develop resilient employees and develop workforce resiliency. Benefits of managing people using a flexible management style.
- Why managers must manage transitions and change using emotional competence.
- Effective ways to handle cliques and informal leaders.
- Why the best way to manage change is to manage learning. How to increase work team resiliency by managing with questions.
- How people and groups learn to be excellent. How to create attitudes of professionalism.
- How to avoid “groupthink” in teams. Why a successful positive attitude includes negative thinking. Techniques for handling workplace negativity in positive ways.
- How resiliency is related to long-life and good health.
- How to bounce back from unexpected difficulties. How to gain strength from distressing experiences and convert misfortune into good luck.

Each registrant will receive a copy of Dr. Seibert’s book, The Resiliency Advantage: Master Change, Thrive Under Pressure, and Bounce Back from Setbacks.

REGISTRATION

Name:	Agency:
Phone:	Address:
Fax:	Email:

Cost: \$145.00 per person

Method of payment: Cash Government Voucher Credit Card Pay at the door

Mail registration to:	Federal Executive Board 215 Dean A. McGee, Ste 320 Oklahoma City, OK 73102
Or fax to:	405-231-4165

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SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
March 2007				1	2	3
4	5	6 Agency Visits-Stillwater	7	8	9	10
FEMA Training: Risk Assessment Design						
11	12	13 Leadership FEB	14 7:30 Mayors Committee PreRetirement: CSRS	15 PreRetirement: FERS	16	17
18	19	20 2:00 FECC	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 Resilience Training	28	29	30 Naturalization 2:00 Emgcy Prep /COOP Council	31

OKLAHOMA FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD
 215 DEAN A. MCGEE AVENUE, STE 320
 OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73102-3422
 OFFICIAL BUSINESS ONLY

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