



INTERAGENCY CONNECTION

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

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

(405) 231-4167

Chair's Corner



As the saying goes, April showers bring May flowers (and tax filing deadlines)!

Who KNEW how the federal government would be involved in such a simple statement!?

While we can't control how much precipitation falls on your foliage, the **NOAA** agencies can give you lots of data, predictions, and history information. Information on how to access their information is contained in our **Spotlighting Federal Agencies**, this month.

The **Internal Revenue Service** has a robust website that may be of significant value to you as you complete your taxes for this year's filing season. We've included an article on page 11 outlining some tax tips for 2009, along with the corresponding web link so that you can research additional information.

In regard to agency functions, don't forget to take advantage of our coordinated University of **Tulsa Career FEST**. If you've not contacted the University, yet, to take advantage of the opportunity to participate, please reconsider. Information and point of contact is provided on page 2.

This month is our annual **Administrative Office Professional Training**. A great opportunity to provide training for our clerical and support staff in the local area, the FEB coordinates a full agenda for the day. A registration form is provided on page 9 for your convenience.

This month, our **Leadership FEB** will visit the 507th Refueling Wing at Tinker Air Force Base. This year's class has 20 participants from around the state, and this month they will have a visitor from Atlanta's FEB Leadership program joining them for the forum.

I want to thank all the federal leaders who took the time to nominate your high-performing employees for recognition! Our **FEB Awards program** promises to be the best ever. We have a robust number of nominees with impressive accomplishments. The nominations are with the selection committee at this point and we are awaiting the ratings.

The **Awards luncheon** is scheduled for Monday, May 4, 2009; while there was no space in this newsletter to include the registration form, it is available on our website at: www.oklahoma.feb.gov. The luncheon is open for anyone to attend and all are welcome.

Also watch for emails regarding forums for agencies impacted by the **2009 Recovery Act**. These will be meetings in which agencies can share information on successes and challenges.

I look forward to seeing you at the various events our FEB has planned over the next few months!

Dr. Barry Dodson, Chairman

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News from Around Oklahoma

University of Tulsa Career FEST



Your organization is invited to be a Showcased Employer at the

University of Tulsa, as part of their Career FEST Friday. (Friday Employer Showcase Time). This may be a good way to access quality students on campus; AND, the Director of Career Services will even buy you lunch (if you are selected).

Career Services has launched a new program showcasing employers who hire Liberal Arts and Business Students for both full-time positions and internships. Every Friday, they will host one or two employers from 11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at a table outside of the University of Tulsa bookstore in the Allen Chapman Activities Center. They will also let faculty know you are coming if you would be willing to do class presentations.

If you would like for your agency to be a Showcased Employer and you or another representative are available, select the Friday that is most convenient and reply to this email. If you have questions, please email shelly-holly@utulsa.edu or call Shelly Holly, Director of Career Services, at 918-631-2549.

March 27, April 3, April 10, April 17 and April 24.

Shelly Holly
Director, Career Services
University of Tulsa
800 S Tucker Drive
Tulsa, OK 74104-9700
(918) 631-2549
<http://www.hireTUgrads.com>



Americans live in the most severe weather-prone country on Earth. Each year, Americans cope with an average of 10,000 thunderstorms, 5,000 floods, 1,000 tornadoes, and an average of 2 landfalling deadly hurricanes. And this on top of winter storm, intense summer heat, high winds and other deadly weather impacts. You can make sure your community is ready for the weather with the National Weather Service's **StormReady**® program.

Some 90% of all presidentially declared disasters are weather related, leading to around 500 deaths per year and nearly \$14 billion in damage. StormReady, a program started in 1999 in Tulsa, OK, helps arm America's communities with the communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property—before and during the event. StormReady helps community leaders and emergency managers strengthen local safety programs.

StormReady communities are better prepared to save lives from the onslaught of severe weather through better planning, education, and awareness. No community is storm proof, but StormReady can help communities save lives. Does StormReady make a difference? See how it saved more than 50 movie goers in Ohio

at <http://www.stormready.noaa.gov/vanwert.htm>

Find out more by visiting <http://www.stormready.noaa.gov>. If you're not a county or community, try their publications page at <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/brochures.shtml> for tips on protecting your business, home and family.



Spotlighting Information in Public Service

Did You Know...

NOAA In Oklahoma

Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National Severe Storms Laboratory, NOAA Laboratory

The NOAA National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL) leads the way in investigations of all aspects of severe and hazardous weather to improve severe weather warnings and forecasts. NSSL's basic and applied research focuses on understanding severe weather processes, developing weather observation technology, and improving forecast tools. NSSL continues to be a pioneer in the development and testing of new radar technologies, including phased array radar, dual-polarized radar, and mobile radars. These are essential to providing integrated observations, predictions and warnings of high-impact weather including tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and flash floods.

NSSL research supports NWS operational forecasting by contributing to the development of cutting edge techniques, applications and technology to help forecasters make better and faster warning decisions. NSSL hydrometeorology research improves monitoring and prediction of floods and flash floods through quantitative precipitation estimation techniques. Seeking to understand the causes of severe weather and exploring new ways to use weather information to assist National Weather Service forecasters and Federal, university and private sector partners are key in NSSL's mission.

<http://www.nssl.noaa.gov>

National Weather Service (NWS), Radar Operations Center, Radar Support

The Radar Operations Center (ROC) provides centralized meteorological, computer software, maintenance, and engineering support for all 158 NEXRAD (WSR-88D) radar systems deployed worldwide. Supported by the Departments of Commerce, Transportation and Defense, the ROC is responsible for modifying and enhancing the WSR-88D systems during their operational life to meet changing requirements, technology advances and improved understanding of the application of these systems to real-time weather operations. The ROC also operates WSR-88D test systems for the development of hardware and software upgrades to enhance maintenance, operation and provide new functionality. The facility houses a 24 hour, seven

days a week help desk that assists radar sites with technical support more than 12,000 times each year. The ROC was established in 1987.

<http://www.roc.noaa.gov>

National Weather Service Training Division, Warning Decision Training Branch

The Warning Decision Training Branch (WDTB) in Norman, OK, develops and delivers training on the integrated elements of the warning process within a National Weather Service forecast office. Part of the National Weather Service Training Division, the WDTB training activities provide basic and advanced WSR-88D operator proficiency, with an emphasis on the integrated data environment, warning methodology and situation awareness. The WDTB's goal is to increase expertise among NWS personnel in order to better serve the public in warning situations. The WDTB was established in 1989.

Weather Forecast Office, Norman WFO

This National Weather Service Weather Forecast Office provides weather and flood warnings, daily forecasts and meteorologic and hydrologic data for most of Oklahoma and a portion of north central Texas.

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/oun/>

National Weather Service (NWS), Weather Forecast Office, Tulsa, Arkansas-Red Basin River Forecast Center

This National Weather Service Weather Forecast Office provides weather and flood warnings, daily forecasts and meteorologic and hydrologic data for northeastern Oklahoma and the most northwestern counties of Arkansas. The co-located Arkansas-Red River Forecast Center (ABRFC) provides forecasts of river levels and flooding potential for the area's hydrologic basin. It also provides flash flood and headwater guidance that WFO's need to carry out their Flash Flood Watch/Warning responsibilities. The ABRFC serves a 208,000 square mile area that covers the entire state of Oklahoma and parts of Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Nebraska, Missouri, and Arkansas.

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tulsa>



GSA Expo, June 9-11, 2009



The General Services Administration (GSA) will host its 15th International Products and Services Expo in San Antonio, TX, June 9-11, 2009, at the Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center. This is a dual training conference and vendor exposition designed for all levels of government personnel who make or influence procurement decisions. Expo is a must-attend event – last year, we had over 9,000 attendees! Our professional training offerings provide an unmatched opportunity for attendees to learn how GSA can *Help Your Agency Achieve Excellence!*

Benefits of Attending Expo 2009:

- **FREE** for military, federal, state and local government employees to attend
- Build your acquisition knowledge and earn Continuous Learning Points (CLPs) toward your annual training requirements
- Network with hundreds of GSA and other agency experts
- Meet with GSA vendors providing specialized technical expertise
- Bring your regional/national internal agency meeting to the Expo and enjoy **FREE** meeting space

Admission is FREE for all military, federal, state and local government employees! There will be over 200 CLP-certified classes covering all aspects of acquisition, program management, e-commerce, technology, state and local purchasing programs, and environmental issues. There will also be training courses on the use of GSA Schedules, GSA Advantage (our on-line

ordering system), GSA e-Buy (our electronic Request for Quote tool), use of government purchase and travel cards, and much more...

The Expo also provides access to over 700 commercial partners, all GSA Multiple Award Schedules contract holders. These vendors will not only display their products and services, but will be available to discuss technical issues as well.

And there is also a “Native Nations Gathering” at this year’s Expo, which is a special session for all Tribal and Native Nations attendees on June 9 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. This seminar will provide training on the GSA SmartPay 2 purchase, travel and fleet card programs, GSA commercial contracts, Travel/City Pair Programs, vehicle leasing and purchasing options, personal property utilization, and GSA e-Tools (Advantage, e-Buy, etc.).

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 about free meeting space, training classes (times and descriptions), area hotel information and lodging reservations, free on-line registration, etc., can be found at our website www.expo.gsa.gov. Should you have any questions about the Expo or any other GSA issue, please call Brian Talley, GSA Oklahoma Customer Service Director, at (405) 231-4825 or (405) 290-8845 (cell).



Alternative Discipline: What You Need to Know

The MSPB defines alternative discipline as an effort undertaken by employers to address employee misconduct using a method other than traditional discipline. Most readers are likely familiar with the traditional concepts of a reprimand or suspension to deal with an employee's misconduct. With alternative discipline, management takes a different course of action to try to change the behavior, such as having the employee perform community service or attend anger management classes.

Alternative discipline is an important management tool. It allows the agency to tailor its approach to a specific situation and could cut down on future litigation.

Alternative discipline is typically an agreement between an employee and the employer. As such, it is limited only by the imagination of the parties. Keep in mind, however, that the Federal Circuit has held that alternative discipline agreements are considered contracts, and the terms of the agreement will be evaluated by the MSPB or the courts under the principles of contract law. Thus, it is important that the agreements are well drafted.

Agencies should keep in mind four specific points about drafting agreements. First, if the language in the contract written by the agency is ambiguous, and the employee reasonably challenges it at a later date, then the agreement will be interpreted in favor of the employee.

So be clear and make sure the terms are not subject to multiple interpretations. Second, the agreement implies that both the agency and the employee will act in good faith. The agency's failure to do so

can be considered a breach of the contract, making the terms unenforceable. Third, the agency cannot force or coerce the employee an alternative discipline agreement. The employee must knowingly and voluntarily enter into the agreement and understand any rights being waived. Finally, agencies cannot include terms or conditions that may be impossible to accomplish. The employee should not be set up to fail, and the agency should not promise anything it cannot actually do.

Ultimately, supervisors need to understand these points to ensure the agreements they sign are valid, binding contracts. Unfortunately, the MSPB found in a recent survey that few agencies educate supervisors on the use of alternative discipline, how to abide by the terms of the agreement, and what their legal obligations are under the agreement. Guidance from agencies on creating enforceable alternative discipline agreements might be helpful to managers and human resources staff. For more on alternative discipline, see MSPB's report, *Alternative Discipline: Creative Solutions for Agencies to Effectively Address Misconduct*, available at www.mspb.gov.

Taken from the February 2009 Issues of Merit, a publication of the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, Office of Policy and Evaluation

In most important ways, leaders of the future will need the traits and capabilities of leaders throughout history: an eye for change and a steady hand to provide both vision and reassurance that change can be mastered, a voice that articulates the will of the group and shapes it to constructive ends, and an ability to inspire by force of personality while making others feel empowered to increase and use their own abilities. –Rosabeth Moss Kanter



Continuity of Operations (COOP) Excellent Series I Practitioners Certification



In an effort to further support Continuity of Operations efforts of the federal agencies in Oklahoma, the Federal Executive Board is providing information on a FEMA developed certification program available to employees completing specific COOP training. There are two levels of COOP certification available and some of the required training is available through independent study, online.

Individuals completing the pre-requisites can apply for certification:

1. The FEMA Emergency Management Institute will issue all certificates
2. Send certificate requests and supporting information to LeAnn Jenkins, LeAnn.Jenkins@gsa.gov or fax to 405-231-4165
3. Please include your name, organization, work address, email address and phone number
4. Expect to wait up to six weeks to receive your certificate

Submission for Certification Consideration

Name:	SSN:
DOB:	Agency:
Phone:	Email:

Submit copies of training completion for each of the following courses, along with this registration form to the Federal Executive Board (info below). *No certificates have been issued for the Determined Accord exercise; provide date and location of attendance for verification.*

	COURSE TITLE	Completed
<input type="checkbox"/>	IS 546: COOP Awareness Course,	
<input type="checkbox"/>	IS 547: Introduction to COOP,	
<input type="checkbox"/>	IS-242: Effective Communication	
<input type="checkbox"/>	B/E/L 548: COOP Manager's T-t-T Course,	
<input type="checkbox"/>	B/E/L 550: COOP Planner's T-t-T Workshop	
<input type="checkbox"/>	IS 100: Intro to Incident Command System (ICS),	
<input type="checkbox"/>	IS 230: Principles of Emergency Management,	
<input type="checkbox"/>	IS 700: Intro to National Incident Management System (NIMS),	
<input type="checkbox"/>	IS 800-B: A National Response Framework (NRF), An Introduction,	
<input type="checkbox"/>	E/B 136 or IS 139: Exercise Development Course/Exercise DesignCourse/or COOP Exercise Design/ Development T-t-T Course,	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete attendance in continuity exercise Determined Accord (Pandemic Preparedness), and	
<input type="checkbox"/>	NARA/CoSA Vital Records Training (optional recommended)	

Successful completion of the above criteria will make you eligible to become a certified Professional Continuity Practitioner

Submit registration and copies of training certificates by fax to: 405-231-4165 (Attn: LeAnn Jenkins)



FEMA-certified “Train the Trainer” L-550 COOP Planner’s Training Course



Through a partnership of FEMA and the Oklahoma FEB, we will be hosting the above training in Oklahoma City. This training is a 3 day format intended to leverage resources and multiply results. The Continuity of Operations (COOP) Planner’s Training Course is to provide COOP training for Program Managers at the Federal, State, Local, and Tribal levels of government. This training includes a train-the-trainer module to equip the managers to train the course to others.

Upon completion of this course, participants should be able to do the following:

- Describe the importance of COOP planning to your Departments/Agencies overall mission;
- Complete an assessment of your current COOP Plan; Describe the six steps in the COOP Planning Model;
- Relate the planning steps to each phase of COOP operations.
- Identify key persons who should be included in the COOP Planning process;
- Identify gaps in your current plans, develop a strategy to acquire needed information;
- Analyze the risks and vulnerabilities related to the selection of alternate facilities;
- Revise or develop your COOP plan;
- Develop/review a strategy for testing, training, and exercising your COOP Plan;
- Develop/review a Multi-year Strategic Program Management Plan (MYSPMP) for continued maintenance/viability of your COOP Plan;
- Incorporate Pandemic Planning into your COOP Plan; Successfully teach the course

Prerequisites:

- Successful completion of COOP Managers Train-the-Trainer Course (B/E/L 548);
- A COOP Plan (a final or draft plan will be required for activities during the course). Each student should bring a copy of their current plan or draft plan.

There is no cost for the training; however, the employee’s agency is responsible for all travel costs associated with this training.

Course title:	L550 – COOP Planner’s Training Course
Location:	Public Works Department Training Center located at 3738 S.W. 15th Street
Date:	June 23-25, 2009
Time:	Tues: 10:00a.m.-4:30p.m.; Wed: 8:00a.m.-4:30p.m.; Thurs: 8:00a.m.-Noon

We wish to utilize one of the forty training slots available for the following individual:

Name: _____	Agency: _____
Address: _____	
Phone/Fax: _____	Email: _____

A signed copy of FEMA Form 75-5 must also accompany this form (available on our website at www.oklahoma.feb.gov/Forms/FEMA75.pdf) Call the FEB Office at (405) 231-4167 to have this form faxed to you if you do not have internet access.

Please return this registration with Form 75-5 to the FEB Office **no later than June 12, 2009** in order to ensure sufficient materials.

Mail to:	Oklahoma Federal Executive Board 215 Dean A. McGee, Ste 320 Oklahoma City, OK 73102	Or fax to:	405-231-4165
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Annual FEB Administrative Professional's Day Training April 22, 2009



Tell them you appreciate them in a way they'll remember!
Send your clerical and support staff to a day of training on Administrative Professional's Day that will provide ideas on how they can perform more efficiently, improve communication skills and leave them energized and ready to tackle their duties, refreshed.



Increasing Personal Value in the Organization



Date:	Wednesday, April 22, 2009 -- (Administrative Professional's Day)
Time:	7:30 a.m. Registration, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Training
Location:	USPS National Center for Employee Development,
Cost:	\$100.00

Topics	Presenter	Objective
Identity Theft	Terri Talley, Allegiance Credit Union	Common ID theft occurrences, how to protect yourself, dumpster diving, skimming, phishing, "old fashioned" stealing
Change Style Indicator	LeAnn Jenkins, Federal Executive Board	Understanding "change preference", personality characteristics, perceptions of others, opportunities for collaboration and implications for creativity.
Personal Safety and Security Issues	TBD--US Probation Office, Western District	
Diversity	Mary Pinkston, Tinker AFB	How to view your world differently

Registration

Name _____ Agency _____

Phone _____ Email _____

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

Cancellation Policy: Understanding that unforeseen circumstances may preclude an individual from attending, refunds and cancellations will be permitted through April 17, 2009. 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!



Federal Government Lean Six Sigma

An Oklahoma Forum for
Promoting Continuous Improvement in Government Orgns
April 7, 2009



Join us in a participative one-day workshop to help establish a local federal community of *Lean Six Sigma* (LSS) practitioners. This event is a first step in establishing an Oklahoma area forum for federal LSS practitioners to share best practices and lessons learned; and to assist one another in implementing or improving LSS programs & practices in our respective organizations.

This is an excellent opportunity to:

- Leverage LSS expertise between federal agencies, departments, and offices
- Support cross-agency LSS mentoring and coaching
- Develop economies of scale for contracting of LSS training and miscellaneous services

Who Should Attend: Any federal employee tasked with "doing more with less". No pre-requisites or familiarity with Lean Six Sigma is required to have a return on your investment through attending this one-day workshop.

Lean Six Sigma is both a business philosophy and a process improvement methodology that is applicable to all business activities across the federal government.

This workshop will include such topics as How to Deploy a LSS Program, Overview of 7 Basic Quality Tools, Lean and Six Sigma?, and How to Find a Good LSS Project.

Instructors: In order to provide a well-rounded experience for attendees, instructors are from FAA, Tinker AFB, US Navy, and the Postal Service.

Date:	Tuesday, April 7, 2009
Time:	8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Registration begins at 8:00 a.m.)
Location:	Federal Transfer Training Center, 7410 S. MacArthur Blvd, OKC, OK 73169
Cost:	\$35.00 for early registration by Mar 10th, or \$50.00 for late registration up to Mar 31 st

This is an Oklahoma FEB initiative in coordination with the Enterprise Services Center. For event content and agenda participation, please call Greg Logan, Enterprise Services Center, at 405-954-8382.

Registration

Name _____ Agency _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

[] I have a topic that would be useful to present as a best practice or lesson learned.

Method of payment: [] Cash [] Government Voucher [] Credit Card

Mail registration to: Federal Executive Board 215 Dean A. McGee, Ste 153, Oklahoma City, OK 73102	Or fax: 405-231- 4165
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Cancellation Policy: Understanding that unforeseen circumstances may preclude an individual from attending, refunds and cancellations will be permitted through March 31, 2009. 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!



Five Important Changes for Taxpayers

IRS Tax Tip 2009-24

Here are a few tax law changes you may want to note before filing your 2008 federal tax return:

1. Expiring Tax Breaks Renewed

The following popular tax breaks were renewed for tax-years 2008 and 2009:

- Deduction for state and local sales taxes on Form 1040 Schedule A, Line 5
- Educator expense deduction on Form 1040, Line 23 or Form 1040A, Line 16
- Tuition and fees deduction on Form 8917

In addition, the residential energy-efficient property credit is extended through 2016. In general, solar electric, solar water heating and fuel cell property qualify for this credit. Starting in 2008, small wind energy and geothermal heat pump property also qualify.

2. Standard Deduction Increased for Most Taxpayers

The 2008 basic standard deductions all increased. They are:

- \$10,900 for married couples filing a joint return and qualifying widows and widowers
- \$5,450 for singles and married individuals filing separate returns
- \$8,000 for heads of household

Beginning this year, taxpayers can claim an additional standard deduction based on the state or local real-estate taxes paid in 2008. Also new for 2008, a taxpayer can increase his standard deduction by the net disaster losses suffered from a federally declared disaster.

3. Contribution Limits Rise for IRAs and Other Retirement Plans

This filing season, more people can make tax-deductible contributions to a traditional IRA. The deduction is phased out for singles and heads of household who are covered by a workplace retirement plan and have modified adjusted gross incomes between \$53,000 and \$63,000. For married couples filing jointly, the income phase-out range is \$85,000 to \$105,000.

4. Standard Mileage Rates Adjusted for 2008

The standard mileage rates for business use of a vehicle:

- 50.5 cents per mile from Jan. 1 to June 30, 2008
- 58.5 cents per mile driven during the rest of 2008

The standard mileage rates for the cost of operating a vehicle for medical reasons or a deductible move:

- 19 cents per mile Jan. 1 to June 30, 2008
- 27 cents from July 1 to Dec. 31, 2008

The standard mileage rate for using a car to provide services to charitable organizations remains at 14 cents a mile. Special rates apply to the Midwest disaster area.

5. Kiddie Tax Revised

The tax on a child's investment income previously only applied to children younger than age 18. It now applies if the child has investment income greater than \$1,800 and is:

- Younger than 18
- 18 years of age and had earned income that was equal to or less than half of his or her total support in 2008
- Older than 18 and younger than 24, a student and during 2008 had earned income that was equal to or less than half of his or her total support.

Taken from <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=120227,00.html>



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
April 2009			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 Lean Six Sigma Workshop	8 7:30 Mayors Committee Agency Visits-OKC	9 1:00 AIC telecon	10 Agency Visits- Tulsa	11
12	13	14 2:00 Emgcy Prep	15 10:00 ITC	16 <i>Leadership FEB</i>	17	18
19	20	21	22 Administrative Office Professional's Day Training	23 11:00 FECC	24 Naturalization	25
26	27	28	29	30 10:00 Executive Policy Council		

The real leader has no need to lead—he is content to point the way. —Henry Miller

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