INTERAGENCY CONNECTION

215 Dean A. McGee, Suite 153, Oklahoma City, OK 73102 http://www.oklahoma.feb.gov/ (405) 231-4167

Chair's Corner

Happy New Year to all!

We are beginning the calendar year with a flurry of activities! With the continuing federal budget challenges, our Federal Executive Board (FEB) has planned activities that allow our agencies to participate in valuable training and activities with minimal (if any) cost.

The following activities have more detailed information provided on our website for your use, distribution to the appropriate division of your agency, and action:

Employee of the Year Award Nomination package: Each year, the Oklahoma FEB provides federal agencies in Oklahoma the opportunity to nominate their high performing employees (those that go above and beyond what they are expected to do). The nomination package for 2014 is provided on our website and has been sent in the form of a web link to federal leaders in Oklahoma. The deadline for nominations is February 22nd, be sure to nominate your best!

Award Luncheon: The award luncheon is open registration for agency leaders, supervisors and other federal employees to attend. You can register to attend, even if you do not have employees competing. This provides an opportunity to participate in the event and determine whether you wish to nominate employees for future awards

Lunch and Learn Leadership: We have acquired leadership videos from Stanford University School of Business on the topics of 1) Power of Persuasion and 2) the Exceptional Leader. These are two training opportunities for our federal leaders, senior managers, and aspiring leaders. Registrations for these two trainings will be provided in future newsletters, as the time approaches.

Two additional opportunities exist for Federal Agency heads for the topics of 1) Extraordinary Results, and 2) A Leader's Legacy.

COOP Training: We have two events planned for Continuity of Operations (COOP). Registrations for both of these no-cost training opportunities are provided in this newsletter:

Resilient Accord Tabletop Exercise (a cyber scenario) is scheduled for March 27th, and

L-550 COOP Planners Course, a FEMA course, will be hosted by the Oklahoma FEB, April 15-17th.

The **FEB's Emergency Communication and Hazardous Weather Coordination Policy** has been updated, provided to OPM HQ and is provided on our website.

Wishing you a year of challenges that may all be conquered!

Julie A Gosdin

Julie Gosdin, Chairperson

Preparing for Inclement Winter Weather

This article is to share a couple of useful resources to prepare for winter weather.

Please share with employees, co-workers, family members and others!

Both applications are free for cell phones and are available through the Android Market (for smart phones) and the Apple Store (for iPhones).

Winter Survival Kit App

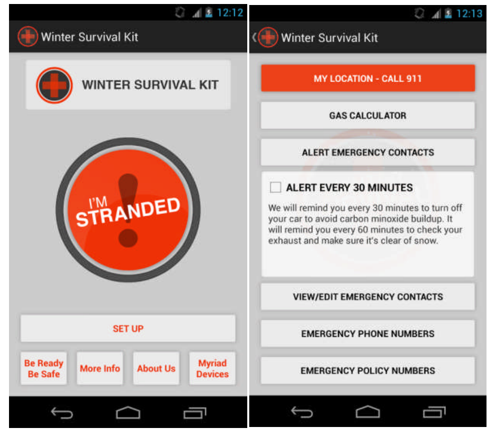
The Winter Survival Kit app can be as critical as a physical winter survival kit if you find yourself stuck or stranded in severe winter weather conditions. This app will help you find your current location, call 911, notify your friends and family, calculate how long you can run your engine to keep warm and stay safe from carbon monoxide poisoning.

You can use the Winter Survival Kit app to store important phone and policy numbers for insurance or roadside assistance. You also can designate emergency contacts you want to alert when you become stranded.

If you become stranded, the Winter Survival Kit app will help you determine your geographic location and contact emergency services. The app's "gas calculator" will help you estimate how long you can run your engine on your remaining fuel.

Winter Survival Kit will alert you every 30 minutes to remind you to periodically turn off your engine and to check your exhaust pipe for snow buildup. These alerts are critical in helping you avoid deadly carbon monoxide poisoning.

Winter Survival Kit also provides North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension Service information on how to put together a physical winter survival kit and prepare your vehicle for winter driving, and how to stay safe when stranded in a winter storm.



Winter Wake Up App

Need to Wake Up Early to Clean Your Car?

Winter Wake-up is a new app that combines two different usual tasks in a fun way. It's an alarm app that will automatically check the weather for you, and it will wake you up early if there's either snow or frost on the menu for the day. You can set two different settings, put in your zip code, and then get a custom alarm based on what it's doing outside. Though the reviews indicate that this app needs some work, no one is denying the beauty of its premise: synced to your local weather reports, the app alerts you to wake up early if there's snow on the ground and ice on your windshield, giving you more time to get your car clean before you leave the house.

Spotlighting Information in Public Service

Did You Know…

Southwestern Power Administration

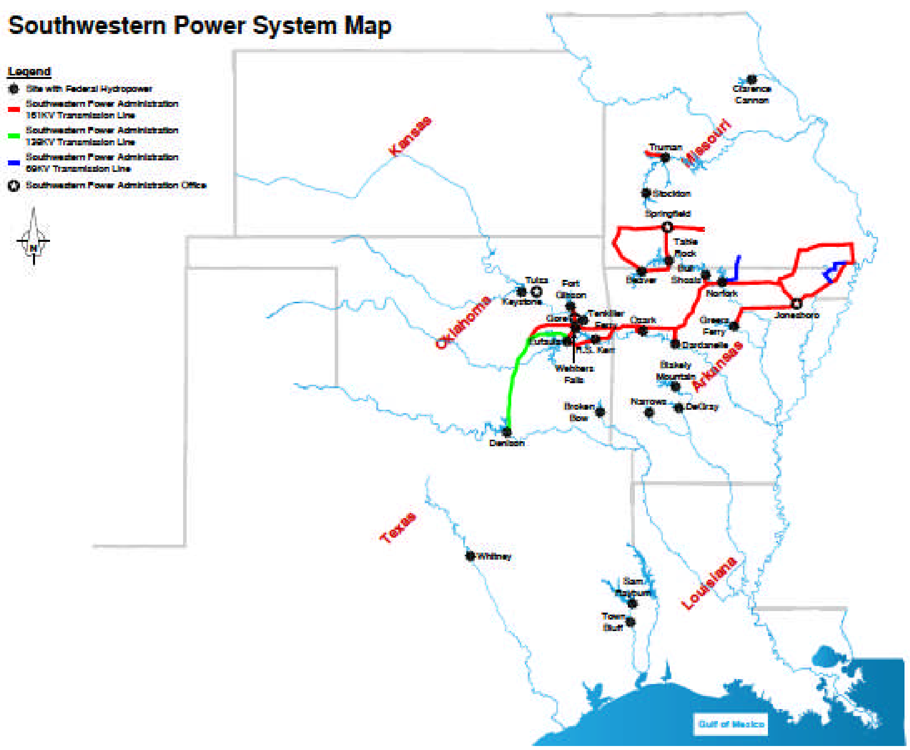
Southwestern Power Administration was established in 1943 by the Secretary of the Interior as a Federal Agency that today operates within the Department of Energy under the authority of Section 5 of the Flood Control Act of 1944.

As one of four Power Marketing Administrations in the United States, Southwestern markets hydroelectric power in Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas from 24 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers multipurpose dams.

By law, Southwestern's power is marketed and delivered primarily to public bodies such as rural electric cooperatives and municipal utilities. Southwestern has over one hundred such "preference" customers, and these entities ultimately serve over eight million end-use customers.

Southwestern operates and maintains 1,380 miles of high-voltage transmission lines, substations, and a communications system that includes microwave, VHF radio, and state-of-the-art fiber optics. Staff members work from offices located in Gore, Oklahoma; Jonesboro, Arkansas; Springfield, Missouri; and Tulsa, Oklahoma. Around-the-clock power scheduling and dispatching are conducted from the Springfield Operations Center.

Mission: Southwestern Power Administration's mission is to market and reliably deliver Federal hydroelectric power with preference to public bodies and cooperatives. This is accomplished by maximizing the use of Federal assets to repay the Federal investment and participating with other water resource users in an effort to balance diverse interests with power needs within broad parameters set by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and implementing public policy.



7 Sneaky Tactics People Use to Influence You

Taken from GovExec.com article by Adam Cole, dted November 15, 2013

Image via Stokkete/Shutterstock.com

Early in life, when people wanted to influence us, they got away with flattery and conformity. By complimenting us and agreeing with our opinions, they buttered us up and got what they wanted. As we gain experience with coworkers and bosses, advertisers and marketers, and friends and family members, we become wiser. We recognize these thinly veiled ingratiation attempts, and they fall flat. Like a virus that mutates after being neutralized by medicine, many people have responded by developing more sophisticated weapons of influence. These stealth strategies are harder to spot, and if we're not aware of them, we fall for them.

To learn about these tactics, strategy researchers Ithai Stern and James Westphal surveyed and interviewed thousands of members of the corporate elite. They asked CEOs, top executives, and board members at some of the world's largest companies how they got away with ingratiating without making others suspicious of their motives. Seven consistent strategies showed up.

1. Framing flattery as likely to make us uncomfortable

Many executives admitted to prefacing compliments with disclaimers:

- "I don't want to embarrass you, but…"
- "I know you won't want me to say this, but…"
- "You're going to hate me for saying this, but…"

People get away with this sneaky tactic for two reasons. First, it disguises the goal: if the aim was to ingratiate, we expect people to focus on making us feel good, not bad. Second, it portrays us in a positive light: we think we're viewed as modest.

2. Disguising flattery as advice-seeking

Executives reported couching compliments in advice requests. Rather than saying "I really admire your success," one executive asked an influential colleague, "How were you able to pull off that strategy so successfully?"

This makes it seem as if others are trying to learn from us, not ingratiate. As Jack Herbert put it, "We all admire the wisdom of people who come to us for advice." Let's face it: they have really good taste.

3. Complimenting us to our friends

When people compliment us directly, one manager noted, it's "kind of obvious brown-nosing." Instead, if they say nice things about us to our friends, "we will almost always find out about it eventually, and it will mean a lot more."

When people speak glowingly about us behind our backs, we're often pleasantly surprised that they were talking about us, let alone praising us. It also appears more genuine, because they're putting their reputations on the line by telling others that they think highly of us.

4. Arguing before conforming

When people immediately agree with us, we start to become skeptical of their intentions. When they argue with us first and then go along, it validates our beliefs that we're smart and logical. We also walk away with the sense that they're a discerning, critical audience who can be trusted. As one manager explained, "if you keep saying 'yes boss, I agree boss' it looks like sucking up. If you appear to challenge the boss a bit before yielding — 'OK you've convinced me, good point' — the agreement seems more genuine."

5. Conforming to our opinion after learning about it from someone else

Another way that people mask their ingratiation goals is to gather independent information on our opinions and then express agreement. In the words of a manager, "if you find out the boss' opinion on a policy from talking to his friend and then later in talking to the boss you raise the same opinion… it would come across as more sincere."

When this happens, we often have no clue that people were already aware of our views. We end up giving them credit for agreeing with us on their own. If they reached the same conclusion as us, they must be pretty bright.

6. Endorsing our values before flattering or conforming
Executives also tucked ingratiation attempts into broader conversations about values. One manager described it this way: "I've found that a good way to begin a discussion is to make some reference to something that's important to me personally and that I have reason to believe is important to the other person — sometimes it's my religious conviction, sometimes it's my commitment to environmental protection."

When people establish that they share our values, we're less likely to doubt what they say next.

7. Referencing a common group before flattering or conforming
A variation on this theme involves highlighting shared membership in a club or organization. Here's how one manager summed it up: "If I'm trying to influence someone I might start the conversation by mentioning a group or organization that I know we both belong to… I think it helps build trust so you can be more convincing."

A plea for self-defense
Stern and Westphal found that these tricky tactics were most widely used by executives with upper-class backgrounds and experience in politics, sales, or law. And they paid off. Executives who camouflaged their ingratiation attempts were more significantly more likely to land seats on boards of directors of major companies.

What if we didn't let them get away with it? Next time someone uses one of these techniques on you, I hope you'll be more likely to recognize it, and resist. "For as long as I can recall, I've been an easy mark," writes the psychologist Robert Cialdini in *Influence*. "I am at war with the exploiters — we all are."*Adam is the author of Give and Take, a New York Times and Wall Street Journal bestseller. Follow him on Twitter @AdamMGrant*

Writing Effective Emails

The faster and more easily a document can be read and understood, the more likely it is to be read and understood.

■Convey messages with as few words as possible and ruthlessly deleting unnecessary information without cutting essential background information.

■Open your first email to a new contact with a concise introduction that quickly conveys context. For example: "Dear Joe: Lily Whiteman here from Federal Times. X suggested that I contact you as part of my search for information about Y."

■Get to the point quickly: Explain what needs to be done, by whom and when within the first few sentences of each email.

■Preface a mile-long email string that you are forwarding to another recipient with a quick explanation of the string's importance and necessary actions.

■Use headings to break up text and emphasize your logic in emails that are more than several paragraphs long.

■Highlight deadlines and other essential points with bold, underlining or headings. (Color won't be visible in black-and-white printouts.)

■Use numbered lists to convey the sequence of necessary steps or the relative priority of included items, and using bullets to describe related items that are of equal importance.

■Eliminate or explaining acronyms that may stump anyone who will receive the email directly or via forwarding.

■Include your contact information and title in every email, even if recipients already have this information.

■Repeatedly spell-check and proofread.

Not only is an email's content important, so too is its tone. The more collegial and positive its tone is, the more likely it will be to generate interest and cooperation from its recipients.

Unfortunately, communicating through email is sometimes like talking through a filter that strips words and messages of softening messages and magnifies negativity. It does so because:

■Emails are devoid of facial expressions, physical gestures and vocal tone that may otherwise neutralize the sting of criticism or even mild suggestions from superiors.

■It's easier to "flame" a faceless computer than a person in a face-to-face or telephone interaction. This is partly because participants in email conversations are deprived of immediate feedback to their comments that may compel them to suppress their anger and rudeness and modulate their tone, and thereby maintain civility and prevent disagreements from escalating into arguments.

■Time lags in strained email conversations may magnify tensions. Indeed, emailing criticism without providing quick opportunities for a recipient to respond via phone or face-to-face discussions is the cyber equivalent of lobbing a grenade over a wall and then fleeing. Promote good-will and avoid generating misunderstandings and inflaming tensions via email by:

■Writing emails with a humane tone, even when delivering instructions to subordinates. Remember: There is a person with human emotions on the other side of your computer.

■Use everyday conversational language, even when delivering bureaucratic information.

■Deliver bad news, significant criticisms or denials of requests, in person or by phone, if possible, even if your decision or criticism is in response to an email.

■If you must deliver criticism or bad news or respond to a negative email via email, craft your email to calmly stick to the facts without sounding angry, offensive or defensive; stay polite. Don't send your email impulsively; let it go cold, and then edit it with fresh eyes and an open mind. Seek a second opinion.

■When you must email feedback, such as a document containing your redline/strikeout edits, preface your suggestions or edits with a word of thanks and praise of the recipient's work.

This was reprinted from the Career Matters article published in the Federal Times, November 4, 2013 edition, written by Lily Whiteman, a federal communications expert.

Tapping TSP before 59-1/2

Thrift Savings Plan participants may be able to avoid the Internal Revenue Service's 10% penalty for withdrawing money from their accounts before they've reached age 59½. That's good news for those interested in retiring before reaching that not-so-old age.

If you're considering leaving federal employment while you're young, you should understand your options for accessing your TSP account without triggering the early withdrawal penalty.

One of the simplest ways to avoid the penalty is to use all or part of your balance to purchase a life annuity, either from the TSP's provider or from another insurance company you choose. The annuity converts your balance into a stream of income guaranteed to last at least as long as you live and on which you will pay no early withdrawal penalty.

The annuity is irreversible, however, and may produce a stream of income significantly smaller than what could be produced through other withdrawal methods. More important, it may produce a stream of income that fails to keep pace with inflation, and dramatically reduces your spending power over time. This option should only be selected after careful consideration and comparison with the alternatives.

You can also avoid the early withdrawal penalty by creating and managing your own annuity—taking withdrawals designed to distribute your account balance over your lifetime.

The IRS allows three alternative methods to be used in calculating the penalty-free distribution—called substantially equal periodic payments (SEPPs)—that can be taken from an account each year: the life expectancy method, the annuity factor method or the amortization method.

The life expectancy method calculates each year's distribution by dividing the previous year's ending balance by your remaining life expectancy, according to published tables. The result is annual distributions that are certain to last your lifetime, but which may vary substantially in size from one year to another.

The annuity factor and amortization methods both rely on complex formulas that produce fixed annual distributions that may or may not last for life. These two methods typically produce similar distribution amounts that are significantly higher than that produced by the life expectancy method.

All of the SEPP exemptions require that the distributions continue undisturbed for five years or until you reach age 59½, whichever is longer. You must take exactly the amount produced by an accepted calculation method each year, without adding any money to the account, during the required period. Violating the rules will mean that penalty taxes and interest will be imposed on the entire stream of early distributions taken, a strong incentive to stay within the rules.

There are several additional exemptions to the penalty for distributions taken from your TSP account before you reach age 59½. These exemptions apply if the distribution is:

- Made because the account owner is totally and permanently disabled.
- Ordered by a domestic relations court.
- Made because of the death of the account owner.
- Made during a year in which the account owner has deductible medical expenses exceeding 7.5% of adjusted gross income.
- Made by an account owner who separated from federal service during or after the calendar year in which he reached age 55.

If you qualify for one of these exemptions, you will have unlimited access to your account after you separate from service at any age, without penalty.

The "age 55" exemption is not available for early distributions from an individual retirement arrangement, and this is a key difference between employer-sponsored plans like the TSP and individual retirement accounts. Take this difference into account before deciding to roll over your TSP account to an IRA before you reach age 59½.

Notice that your years of service, law enforcement officer status, the retirement system you're under, the type of retirement you're claiming or whether you're retiring under Voluntary Early Retirement Authority have no impact on the early withdrawal penalty and when it applies. The exceptions listed are the only ones available, and none of them is unique to federal employment.

The rules governing early withdrawals from retirement plans are strict and complicated. Seek the guidance of a qualified accountant or financial planner before making any early distribution decisions, since the effects of your choice will last a lifetime.

Taken from Federal Times article, dtd November 4, 2013, written by Mike Miles, a Certified Financial Planner licensee and principal adviser for Variplan LLC, specializing in retirement planning for federal employees.

DoD/TSA Partner to Provide Military TSA Pre✓™ at 100 Airports

Wednesday, November 13, 2013, TSA and the DoD announced a partnership to expand TSA Pre✓™ expedited screening benefits to more than 2.6 million U.S. Armed Forces service members in the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy, as well as the Reserves and National Guard.

Currently, members of the U.S. Armed Forces can use TSA Pre✓™ lanes at 10 domestic airports by presenting their Common Access Card (CAC). Starting December 20th, these individuals will be able to enjoy the benefits of the program at the 100 participating airports across the country, allowing them to keep their footwear on as well as light outerwear, laptop in its case and their 3-1-1 compliant liquids/gels bag in a carry on in select screening lanes.

Under this partnership, all active duty, U.S. Coast Guard, Reserve and National Guard service members are recommended to:

Check the back of your CAC for your DoD ID number.

Enter the DoD ID number in the Known Traveler ID field when booking your flight.

Check your boarding pass. It should have a TSA Pre✓™ logo if you're traveling after December 20. If you try to print your boarding pass prior to December 20, you may not see the TSA Pre✓™ indicator.

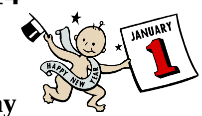
When arriving at the airport, service members will then be permitted access to TSA Pre✓™ lanes for official or leisure travel on participating airlines. Service members do not need to be in uniform to benefit from TSA Pre✓™. If you are traveling with children 12 and under they may accompany service members through the TSA Pre✓™ lanes. However, spouses will need to be enrolled in a trusted traveler program to participate. TSA will always incorporate random and unpredictable security measures throughout the airport. No individual will be guaranteed expedited screening.

TSA has long recognized our men and women in uniform as nearly a quarter of TSA's workforce is a veteran or currently serves as an active duty service member in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Go to www.tsa.gov/tsa-precheck/tsa-precheck-participating-airports for more information about TSA Pre✓™.

http://blog.tsa.gov/2013/11/dodtsa-partner-to-provide-military-tsa.html

UPCOMING EVENTS
January 2014



Jan 1, 2014	**New Year's Day**
Jan 8, 2014	**Agency Visits-McAlester** POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167
Jan 13, 2014 1:00 p.m.	**FEB Network Conference Call** POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167
Jan 15, 2014 10:00 a.m.	**Interagency Training Council** Location TBD POC: Javier Solis, 405-739-7538
Jan 15, 2014	**Agency Visits-Midwest City** POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167
Jan 20, 2014	**Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday observed**
Jan 22, 2014 12:00 noon	**LFCC of Central Oklahoma** 1444 NW 28th St., OKC POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167
Jan 23, 2014 9:30 a.m.	**Agency Visits-Enid** POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167
Jan 23, 2014 2:00 p.m.	**Emergency Preparedness & COOP Council Mtg** OKCCHD, 2600 NE 63rd St, OKC POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167

INSPIRATION CORNER

Any group has a sense of who it is and what it values, but this sense often remains beneath the surface.. A wise leader can discern these unspoken beliefs and articulate them. –Diane Dreher

Learning how to respond to and master the process of change—and even to excel at it—is a critical leadership skill for the 21st century. Constant, rapid change will be a fact of life for all of us.
–Jennifer James

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:

- Michelle Coppedge, Director, FAA Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center
- David Engel, Chief Administrative Judge, Social Security Administration, Tulsa
- Jim Finch, Special Agent in Charge, FBI
- Joe Gallagher, Deputy to Commanding General, Fires Center of Excellence, Fort Sill
- Jerry Hyden, Director, US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Ross Marshall, Executive Director, Tinker AFB
- Dottie Overal, Director, Small Business Administration
- Betty Tippeconnie, Superintendent, BIA-Concho Agency

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) 231-4167 or email to LeAnnJenkins@gsa.gov no later than the 15th of each month.

Officers

Chair:	**Julie Gosdin** District Director US Postal Service, Oklahoma City
Vice-Chair:	**Kevin Donovan** Federal Security Director Transportation Security Administration
Ex-Officio:	**Adrian Andrews** Special Agent in Charge, US Secret Service, Oklahoma City

Staff

Director:	LeAnn Jenkins
Assistant:	Lisa Smith-Longman

Resilient Accord Cyber Security Tabletop Exercise

Date:	Thursday, March 27, 2014	(no cost)
Time:	8:30 a.m. registration 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. exercise	
Location:	OCCHD Auditorium, 2600 NE 63rd Street.	
Objectives	This exercise is designed to increase organizational awareness of the need for cybersecurity considerations. ***We apologize, but the content limits participation to 40 participants, with first consideration being given to agencies who send BOTH their IT representative and COOP representative.*** Because there are several more agencies that need to attend this type of exercise, we have included a short train-the-trainer module at the end of the day for those COOP Managers who attend, so they can provide additional tabletop exercises within their agency or for other agencies in your area.	

Registration Form (up to 3 individuals from the same agency can attend, if registrants include the agency leader [or designee], IT and COOP representatives)

Name:	Agency:
Title:	Email:
Phone:	Fax:

Name:	Agency:
Title:	Email:
Phone:	Fax:

Name:	Agency:
Title:	Email:
Phone:	Fax:

Mail to: Oklahoma Federal Executive Board 215 Dean A. McGee, Ste 153 Oklahoma City, OK 73102	Fax to: 405-231-4165	Email: Leann.jenkins@gsa.gov Or Lisa.Smith-Longman@gsa.gov

FEMA-certified “Train the Trainer” COOP Training Courses

Through a partnership between FEMA and the Oklahoma FEB, we will be hosting the L-550 course in Oklahoma City to leverage resources and multiply results. Upon successful completion of the course, the attendee receives FEMA certification.

- 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.

There is no cost for the training; however, the employee’s agency is responsible for all travel costs associated with this training. ***This event is NOT for industry, business developer or marketing personnel- only technical and management staffs are welcome from industry.***

Course title:	L550 – COOP Planner’s Training Course
Location:	OCCHD Auditorium, 2600 NE 63rd Street, Oklahoma City
Date:	April 15-17, 2014 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Time:	*8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.*

Prerequisites for taking this class: Successful completion of COOP Managers Train-the-Trainer Course (E/L/G or IS548); and 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.

Name:	*Student ID:
Agency Address:	
Certificate mailing address:	
Phone:	Email:

***Obtain a FEMA Student Identification (SID) number:**

Step 1: To register, go to https://cdp.dhs.gov/femasid

Step 2: Click on the "Need a FEMA SID" box on the right side of the screen.

Step 3: Follow the instructions and provide the necessary information to create your account.

Step 4: You will receive an email with your SID number. You should save this number in a secure location.

Step 5: Utilize your SID in Block 3 of the Form 119-25-1 (a signed copy MUST accompany this form)

A signed copy of FEMA Form 119-25-1 must also accompany this form (available on our website at www.oklahoma.feb.gov/Forms/FEMA119-25-1.pdf)

Employee Date

Please return this registration form to the FEB Office ***no later than April 1, 2014*** in order to ensure sufficient materials.

Mail to: Oklahoma Federal Executive Board 215 Dean A. McGee, Ste 153 Oklahoma City, OK 73102	Fax to: 405-231-4165	Email: Leann.jenkins@gsa.gov Or Lisa.Smith-Longman@gsa.gov

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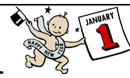
January 2014			1 	2	3	4
5	6 Epiphany	7 Agency mtgs	8 Agency Visits: McAlester	9	10	11
12	13 FEB/OPM Conf Call	14	15 10:00 ITC mtg Agency Visits: OKC, MWC	16	17	18
19	20 	21	22 12:00 LFCC of Central Oklahoma	23 Agency Visit: Vance 2:00 Emgcy Prep Mtg	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31 Chinese New Year	

OKLAHOMA FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD
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We wish to thank the FAA Media Solutions Division for their monthly assistance in the duplication and distribution of this newsletter.