



INTERAGENCY CONNECTION

215 Dean A. McGee, Suite 153, Oklahoma City, OK 73102

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(405) 231-4167

Chair's Corner



Summer weather is upon us! During what is typically the “vacation season” for many employees, our FEB office is involved in numerous projects!

First, I am honored to introduce Daniel Moriasi, Ph.D. Dr. Moriasi is a Research Hydrologist with the USDA Agriculture Research Service in El Reno and will be serving his Executive Potential Program developmental assignment in the Oklahoma FEB office.

Dr. Moriasi has a B.S. Agricultural Engineering degree from Egerton University, Kenya in 1992, an M.S Biological and Agricultural Engineering degree from Louisiana State University in 1997, and a Ph.D. in Engineering Science, Louisiana State University in 2004 with a concentration in Agricultural Engineering, a Minor in Civil Engineering and a Minor in Applied Statistics.



We are proud to be involved in OPM’s *National Mentoring Hub* initiative! Our FEB is responsible for Chairing the Quality Assurance Committee for this national, interagency effort. Daniel Moriasi, PhD (detailed to our FEB office) is working on this during his leadership assignment.

In addition to his detail in the FEB office, Dr. Moriasi will be interviewing some of our

Federal Leaders who are part of the Senior Executive Service; as a result, you may be hearing from the FEB office to make those appointments.

We are also honored to be part of a group to provide information to the Congressional Compliance office in their efforts to develop an **Alternative Dispute Resolution** effort for the Congressional and Senate staff offices.

The Oklahoma FEB has been providing “virtual” support to the **Houston FEB** for many months and is happy that there will soon be a support person hired to staff the Houston FEB office. We will still provide guidance, notifications and supervision of the staff person, but it will be a great help for them to have someone at the location to assist in coordinating events!

We also have events scheduled through the summer that are open for federal employees and our strategic partners. Registration forms are provided in this newsletter for your convenience.

I want to thank each of you for your support of our Federal Executive Board; the participation of our membership makes our FEB quite special!


Julie Gosdin, Chairperson

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EPA Awards FAA for Combating Climate Change by Reducing Water Usage

Release Date: 05/22/2014

Contact Information: Joe Hubbard or Jennah Durant
at 214-665-2200 or r6press@epa.gov

DALLAS – (May 22, 2014) Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is honoring Federal Aviation Administration, Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center, in Oklahoma City for saving money, improving lives and protecting the planet by participating in the Federal Green Challenge (FGC). FAA and its employees were innovative in reducing water usage by 35 percent by using water-saving measures to replace water valves with higher efficiency valves and replacing old equipment with higher efficiency equipment. Nationally, six awards were given to organizations for their innovations in addressing climate change.

“I am pleased to recognize the Federal Aviation Administration for its outstanding leadership to reduce their environmental footprint,” said EPA’s Regional Administrator Ron Curry. “The actions taken by FAA demonstrate the passion and innovative thinking that will lead us to a greener future.”

In 2013, over 400 participating federal facilities, about 1.6 million federal employees, reduced their environmental footprint, which in many cases also resulted in significant cost savings. Federal offices participated by selecting a minimum of two of the six target areas —waste, electronics, purchasing, energy, water, or transportation.

At least one of the selected target areas must be waste, electronics, or purchasing.

“Water is a precious resource and one that we, as Americans, often take for granted. At the FAA we know that living green means living healthy and ultimately, living longer. I am so proud of our team and the work they have done to make these savings possible,” said Michelle Coppedge, Director of the FAA Aeronautical Center.

The FGC is a national effort under EPA’s Sustainable Materials Management program that challenges federal agencies throughout the country to lead by example in reducing the federal government’s environmental impact. Federal agencies are recognized through the FGC for outstanding efforts that go beyond regulatory compliance and strive for annual improvements in selected areas.

These combined efforts resulted in an estimated cost savings of more than \$42 million to the U.S. taxpayer.

You can reduce your environmental footprint by motivating co-workers to reduce energy, save water and recycle waste. Help influence change at your workplace by implementing sustainability into your daily practices.

For more information please visit www.epa.gov/fgc



Spotlighting Information in Public Service

Did you Know?

This article, over the span of numerous years has highlighted the federal agencies in Oklahoma. It has been a long time since we've done such an article and many people in our area have changed; we've received a suggestion to reprint the articles or gather new articles on our agencies whose missions and activities may have changed over the years. As a result, agency leaders, please watch for LeAnn's request for an article on your agency.

Interesting to note that of the SEVEN regional offices this agency has listed, TWO are in Oklahoma!



As an independent federal regulatory agency, the National Indian Gaming Commission (Commission) was established pursuant to the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 (Act). The Commission comprises a Chairman and two Commissioners, each of whom serves on a full-time basis for a three-year term. The Chairman is appointed by the President and must be confirmed by the Senate. The Secretary of the Interior appoints the other two Commissioners. Under the Act, at least two of the three Commissioners must be enrolled members of a federally recognized Indian tribe, and no more than two members may be of the same political party.

The Commission maintains its headquarters in Washington, D.C., with regional offices, located in Portland, Oregon; Sacramento, California; Phoenix, Arizona; St. Paul, Minnesota; **Tulsa, Oklahoma; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma;** and Washington, D.C.

The Commission's primary mission is to work within the framework created by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) for the regulation of gaming activities conducted by tribes on Indian lands to fully realize IGRA's goals: (1) promoting tribal economic development, self-sufficiency and strong tribal governments; (2) maintaining the integrity of the Indian gaming industry; and (3) ensuring that tribes are the primary beneficiaries of their gaming activities.

To achieve these goals, the Commission is to adhere to the principles of good government, including transparency and agency accountability; to promote fiscal responsibility; to operate with consistency and clarity to ensure fairness in the administration of IGRA; and to respect the capabilities and responsibilities of each sovereign tribal nation in order to fully promote tribal economic development, self-sufficiency and strong tribal governments.



Retirement contributions and Taxes

Taken from Career & Benefits article in the 5-19-2014 Federal Times article by Reg Jones

If you are a federal employee, every pay period retirement deductions are taken from your salary.

If you are a CSRS employee, that deduction is 7% (7.5% if you are a special category employee, such as a law enforcement officer, firefighter or air traffic controller). If you are a CSRS Offset employee, it's also 7% (7.5% if you are a special category employee; however, because you are covered by both CSRS and Social Security, 6.2% of that amount goes to pay for Social Security Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI).

If you are a FERS employee hired before 2013, the contributions rate is 0.08 percent (1.3 percent if a special category employee). On the other hand the contribution rate is 3.1 percent if you were first hired, or rehired after a break in service, during 2013 or later; however, it's still 0.08 percent if you were rehired with at least five years of prior creditable or potentially creditable civilian service. Potentially creditable means that you'd get credit for that time if you made a deposit or redeposit to the retirement fund.

What happens to contributions at retirement?

The retirement world used to be a simple place. When you retired, 100 percent of the money you received in your monthly annuity payments came from the amount you had contributed to the retirement fund while you were working. Since you had already paid taxes on your contributions, that money was tax free. Only after that money ran out did you begin receiving the government's share. And that money was fully taxable. Then the world was turned upside down.

Decades ago the law changed. You'll find that change reflected in IRS Publication 721: "part of the annuity benefits you receive is a tax-free recovery of your contributions to the CSRS or FERS. The rest of your benefits are taxable. If your annuity starting date is after November 18,

1996, you must use the Simplified Method to figure the taxable and tax-free parts. If your annuity starting date is before November 19, 1996, you generally could have chosen to use the Simplified Method of the General Rule.

The short story is that part of your annuity will be tax free and part of it won't. The amount of the tax-free portion depends on your age at retirement. It's based on actuarial tables that estimate how long you'll live. And, in recent years, it also depends on whether you have a spouse and, if so, his or her age.

So, what happens if you live longer than the actuarial tables predict? All of your annuity payments from that point forward are taxable. But, what happens if you die before you reach that point? Do the as-yet-untaxed contributions pass on to your spouse in his or her survivor annuity payments? And if you don't have a spouse, to your heirs in a lump-sum payment. In both cases, the answer is yes.

However, there's a wrinkle that almost no one is aware of. While Congress changed the law to reduce the government's outlays and increase its income, it didn't change the way OPM pays your annuities. Just as it has always done, OPM begins by returning your own tax-free contributions, and it continues to do so until the pot of money you contributed runs out. Only then will they start sending you the government's fully taxable money.

When you die, OPM will look at the total annuity they paid out and compare it with the contributions you made to the retirement fund. If the total annuity paid to you exceeds your contributions, there is no unexpended balance. However, if the total is less than that, the non-taxable balance will be transferred either to the survivor spouse's annuity or paid in a lump sum to the heirs.

Reg Jones was head of retirement and insurance programs at the Office of Personnel Management.



7 WAYS TO BREAK DESTRUCTIVE PATTERNS

Lousy leaders solve the same problems over and over.

When problems feel familiar, negative patterns prevail.

The real problem:

The difference between success and failure is how quickly you see and deal with destructive patterns. How many times will you solve the same problem, before you acknowledge the problem isn't the issue?

The pattern is the problem.

Dealing with problems is the work of leadership. Leadership begins with problem

recognition and solution creation. But, leaders who keep solving the same problems don't see the problem.

Solving recurring frustration and failure distracts from the real problem.

The real problem is failure to acknowledge that you're solving the same problems.

The root of destructive patterns:

What you did or didn't do – *before you failed* – reveals the reason you failed. Don't solve recurring failures; solve root causes. When you repeatedly fail, in the same way, *you are the issue!*

What you know:

1. You were doing your best.
2. You were doing what you thought was good.

3. You were doing what you thought would work.

It's uncomfortable to own destructive patterns because you didn't plan to fail.

You are the reason destructive patterns persist.

7 ways to break destructive patterns:

1. Acknowledge your best falls short. (I know. It hurts.)

2. Don't blame others. Take responsibility. Own it.

3. What are you assuming will happen that doesn't? Why doesn't it happen?

4. Expose the pattern to others within your organization. See what they have to say.

5. Listen to people who are closest to the work.

6. Bring in outsiders. *No one sees you better than someone who hasn't seen you before.*

7. Identify key success factors. What are you leaving undone? What must stop? What must be done?



Destructive patterns boil down to pivotal moments when poor choices are repeated.

Reprinted from "Leadership Freak" post on June 7th. <http://leadershipfreak.wordpress.com/2014/06/07/7-ways-to-break-destructive-patterns/>



What TSP investors should worry about

Taken from Federal Times, **Money Matters** article by Mike Miles, dated 6-9-14

As a Thrift Savings Plan investor, what should you worry about? You might be surprised that my list doesn't include whether to contribute to the Roth or traditional accounts, or that you'll have to begin taking distributions someday, if you aren't already. Here is my list of things worth worrying about:

Political meddling. The greatest threat to the TSP, as an institution, comes from members of Congress. The TSP contains nearly \$400 billion. It's the juiciest single profit target for the financial services industry. So far, they've had to go after it one retired investor at a time, but they imagine—fantasize, really—how great it would be to gain access to all \$400 billion at once. Connect the dots, and you realize that the only way to do this without having to pass through the protective fiduciary gauntlet imposed by the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board is through Congressional action.

So far, the attempts by certain members of Congress to insert new investment options, for example, have failed, but it will only take one successful effort to ruin the TSP for the federal worker.

Another stock market crash. This always will be a concern for a retirement investor because the risk is ever-present and can do real harm to your retirement standard of living. It is impossible to predict with certainty when market crashes will occur and how severe they'll be. I think of it this way: At any given moment, the probability that the C, S, I or F Funds will either beat, or lag, the expected rate of return is about 50 percent—a coin flip. The market's tug-of-war makes it so. If you need that expected return to support your planned standard of living in retirement, then you don't want to risk not being there to collect that return when it comes. But if losses come instead, you don't want to participate in

them any more than necessary. For most investors, there's risk to being in and out of the market, so a balance must be struck. Hold as much of each fund as you need to hold to support your retirement plans, but no more.

Rising interest rates. Rising interest rates pose two threats. First, they drive bond prices, and hence values, down. Yes, that means that, like stocks, bonds are risky investments. The F Fund, which is a bond fund, can and does lose value from time to time. Second, rising interest rates tend to depress the value of stocks. This is because the formulas used by competent investors to assess the value of a company's stock are heavily dependent upon a "discount rate" that is, in turn, dependent upon interest rates. And higher discount rates mean lower prices for stocks. The F Fund's primary purpose in your portfolio should be to hedge the risk of loss from holdings in the C, S and I Funds. Whenever you hold stocks, you should also hold bonds as a hedge. Because they are risky assets, however, like stocks, you should only hold the amount needed to efficiently hedge your stock positions, and no more. Today's low interest rates mean that controlling your exposure to the F Fund is particularly important.

The rationale for your choices. There are about a zillion financial decisions you'll face during your life—choices you'll have to make. Before you act, you should thoroughly investigate, understand and critically evaluate the rationale for taking that action and the reasons why that action, alone, is the best possible action to take. There are reliable ways to make your financial decisions, including those you'll make in managing your TSP account, the best they can be. There is no need to settle for anything less.

Mike Miles is a Certified Financial Planner licensee and a principal adviser for Variplan LLC, an independent fiduciary in Ashburn, VA.



Study: You Really Can 'Work Smarter, Not Harder'

By Nanette Fondas, *The Atlantic*, May 15, 2014

Two weeks ago, my oldest son taught my youngest son how to perform a corner kick during half time of my middle son's soccer game. He demonstrated the correct way to swing the leg, angle the foot, and launch the ball toward the goal. When the referee blew his whistle, resuming the game, we moved to a spot of grass nearby. There, my little boy began to explain how to do the corner kick, recounting every detail absorbed during his older brother's half-time tutorial. I nudged him to practice what he had learned, rather than talking about it—after all, he was at a soccer field, with a mother willing to fetch errant balls. But he preferred to articulate each key point he had just learned and teach me how to do it. I thought we were wasting time, but new research says his approach beats mine.

Learning is more effective if a lesson or experience is deliberately coupled with time spent thinking about what was just presented, a new study shows. In "Learning by Thinking: How Reflection Aids Performance," a team of researchers from HEC Paris, Harvard Business School, and the University of North Carolina describe what they call the first empirical test of the effect of reflection on learning. By "reflection," they mean taking time after a lesson to synthesize, abstract, or articulate the important points.

In the lab portion of the study, participants completed a math brain teaser under time pressure and wrote about what strategy they used or might use in the future to solve the problem. This group did 18 percent better in a second-round test than their control-group counterparts, who were not given time to reflect. In the field study, groups of newly-hired customer-service agents undergoing job training

were compared. Some were given 15 minutes at the end of each training day to reflect on the main things they had learned and write about at least two lessons. Those given time to think and reflect scored 23 percent better on their end-of-training assessment than those who were not. And these improvements weren't temporary—they lasted over time, researchers found.



The study also tested the adage that the best way to learn something is to teach it. The research team expected that the process of sharing or teaching newly acquired skills or subject matter would deepen understanding and

produce better task performance. But the experiments revealed no significant difference between reflecting upon new knowledge alone and teaching or sharing it with someone else—both boosted performance.

For younger students, teaching someone else is a good way to practice synthesizing content after a lesson. For older students, other methods suffice: writing themes in journals, summarizing main ideas on note cards, or dictating takeaways into a phone. The authors emphasize that reflection is what matters for learning, whether it's about management skills, school subjects, or sports trivia. It truly is possible, they conclude, to learn "smarter, not harder"—teachers, trainers, and tutors just have to add a little reflection to their lessons.

(Image via Mopic/Shutterstock.com)

http://www.govexec.com/excellence/promising-practices/2014/05/study-you-really-can-work-smarter-not-harder/84484/?oref=eig_online_nl



UPCOMING EVENTS July 2014

- July 4, 2014** **Independence Day** 

- July 7, 2014** **Agency Visits-OKC area**

- July 7, 2014** **FEB/OPM Conference Call**
1:00 p.m. POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167

- July 16, 2014** **Leadership FEB**
All Day FCI, El Reno
POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167

- July 16, 2014** **Interagency Training Council**
10:00 a.m. National Weather Service, Norman
POC: Javier Solis, 405-739-7538

- July 22, 2014** **PreRetirement Workshop-CSRS**
All Day NCED, Norman
POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167

- July 23, 2014** **PreRetirement Workshop-FERS**
All Day NCED, Norman
POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167

- July 23, 2014** **Local Federal Coordinating
Committee for Central OK CFC**
12:00 noon 1444 NW 28th St, OKC
POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167

- July 24, 2014** **Executive Policy Council Mtg**
10:00 a.m. Tulsa
POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167

- July 29, 2014** **Agency Visits-Tulsa**

- July 31, 2014** **Emergency Preparedness &
COOP Council Mtg**
2:00 p.m. OKCCHD, 2600 NE 63rd St, OKC
POC: FEB Office, 405-231-4167

INSPIRATION CORNER

Balance, properly understood, is a cyclic dance of learning, meeting challenges, more learning, more accomplishments. At each step, you are able to bring a higher order of understanding to handle a greater degree of complexity in the challenge. –Joel Levey and Michelle Levey

What we do upon some great occasion will probably depend on what we already are: and what we are will be the result of previous years of self-discipline. –H.P. Liddon

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

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Transportation Security Administration

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Special Agent in Charge,
US Secret Service, Oklahoma City

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Director: LeAnn Jenkins
Assistant: Lisa Smith-Longman
Detail: Daniel Moriasi, Ph.D.



The White House
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

June 14, 2014

FACT SHEET: National Disaster Resilience Competition

Today, President Obama will announce the National Disaster Resilience Competition. Responding to demand from state, local and tribal leaders who are working to increase the safety and security of their communities, the nearly \$1 billion competition will invite communities that have experienced natural disasters to compete for funds to help them rebuild and increase their resilience to future disasters.

The competition announced today will support innovative resilience projects at the local level while encouraging communities to adopt policy changes and activities that plan for the impacts of extreme weather and climate change and rebuild affected areas to be better prepared for the future. As last month's National Climate Assessment made clear, climate change is no longer a distant threat. Average temperatures across the United States have increased between 1.3 and 1.9 degrees Fahrenheit since recordkeeping began in 1895. Heat waves, hurricanes, and severe storms have all become more frequent and more intense. And sea level rise is causing some communities to flood at high tides and threatening homes and critical infrastructure. These facts underscore the need for urgent action to combat the threats from climate change, protect American citizens and communities today, and build a sustainable future for our kids and grandkids.

Communities across the country are contending with more frequent or severe storms, flooding, drought, and wildfire, and have already recognized that in order to be prepared they must plan differently for a new and more uncertain reality. The competition underscores the ability communities have to not only recover from recent disasters but also rebuild better and stronger for the future. It will allow them to engage local stakeholders, nongovernmental organizations and the philanthropic sector to protect their own communities from the impacts of climate change by enhancing resilient infrastructure, building on sound science, and deploying innovative approaches to investments. These funds will enable eligible communities to access resources that help both recover from the previous disaster and make plans, decisions, and investments that make them more resilient to the next disaster.

Of the nearly \$1 billion available through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds from the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013, about \$820 million will be available to all states and local governments that experienced a Presidentially-declared major disaster in 2011, 2012, and 2013. States in the Hurricane Sandy-affected region will be eligible to compete for approximately \$180 million, to help address critical housing needs, building on the successful model set forth by HUD's [Rebuild by Design](#) competition. All successful applicants will need to show how their proposed action relates to the disaster from which they are recovering. HUD will ensure that geographic diversity is a consideration in the selection of participating communities.



F.E.B. EXECUTIVE FORUM

THE EXCEPTIONAL LEADER



Date:	Thursday, August 7, 2014
Location:	Public Works Training Center, 3738 SW 15th Street, OKC
Time:	11:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
Cost:	\$15.00 per person to cover lunch (must be paid in advance)
Who should attend:	Federal Leaders & Managers

Workshop includes a 52 minute DVD presentation by Jack Zenger, author and co-author of six books, including “Results-Based Leadership” and “Handbook for Leadership”, serving as an adjunct faculty member at the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

Empirical data shows a distinct correlation between quality of leadership and business performance. While formal leadership development programs have often failed to achieve measurable results, Jack Zenger believes that average managers can develop the specific traits shared by exceptional leaders—traits that improve retention, customer satisfaction, employee engagement, and bottom-line profitability. Based on the best practices of leading organizations, Zenger defines these characteristics, and offers ten specific recommendations proven to enhance leadership development.

Following the viewing of the DVD, there will be a facilitated discussion on the leadership lessons presented, as well as an opportunity to learn from and network with your fellow Federal Leaders.

Executive Core Qualifications: Leading Change, Leading People, Results Driven

REGISTRATION

Name:	Phone:
Agency:	City:
Email:	

Cost: \$15.00 per person

Buffet Luncheon:

Method of payment: Check Credit Card

Mail registration to:	Federal Executive Board 215 Dean A. McGee, Ste 153 Oklahoma City, OK 73102
Or fax to:	405-231-4165
Or email to:	LeAnn.Jenkins@gsa.gov or Lisa.Smith-Longman@gsa.gov

Cancellation Policy: Understanding that unforeseen circumstances may preclude an individual from attending, refunds and cancellations will be permitted through August 1, 2014. 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 if within the appropriate management structure!



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
July 2014		1	2	3	4  Independence Day	5
6	7 Agency Visits-OKC 1:00 OPM Conf Call	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 10:00 ITC mtg Leadership FEB	17	18 2:00 Phone App mtg w/OSU- OKC	19
20	21	22 Pre-retirement Seminar	23 12:00 LFCC Pre-retirement Seminar	24 10:00 Executive Policy Council mtg	25	26
27	28	29 Agency Visits-Tulsa	30	31 2:00 Emgcy Prep Council Mtg		

OKLAHOMA FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD
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