

OPM Recognizes Outstanding ADR Programs in First Annual Ceremony

*U.S. Attorney
General Janet
Reno delivers the
keynote address at
the ceremony. ▶*



In This Issue

- Manager Spotlight
- White House Mental Health Conference
- Child Support Enforcement
- Creative Child Care
- Commuter Awards
- DOL Commuter Fair
- Worksite Nutrition Conferences!!

More than 300 Federal agency representatives working with Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) attended the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) ceremony marking the first annual OPM Director's Award for Outstanding ADR Programs on July 27, 1999.

The award was initiated in support of President Clinton's May 1, 1998, memorandum to heads of executive departments and agencies directing them to promote greater use of ADR programs. ADR, he said, should be part of an effort "to make the Federal government operate in a more efficient

and effective manner."

The competition for the award was very keen, with seven recipients selected from 49 agency nominations submitted. Each of these programs shared similar goals to resolve issues quickly, reduce the cost of disputes, avoid litigation, create resolutions that are durable, and promote better work environments.

OPM Director Janice Lachance said that the Director's Award "honors those programs that resolve disputes that might otherwise have to move to formal employee grievance, appeal, or complaint process." She acknowledged that the current formal admin-

istrative adjudicatory process can be a "very lengthy, very costly, very frustrating, and sometimes a seemingly endless road to resolution. Today ADR offers a better road."

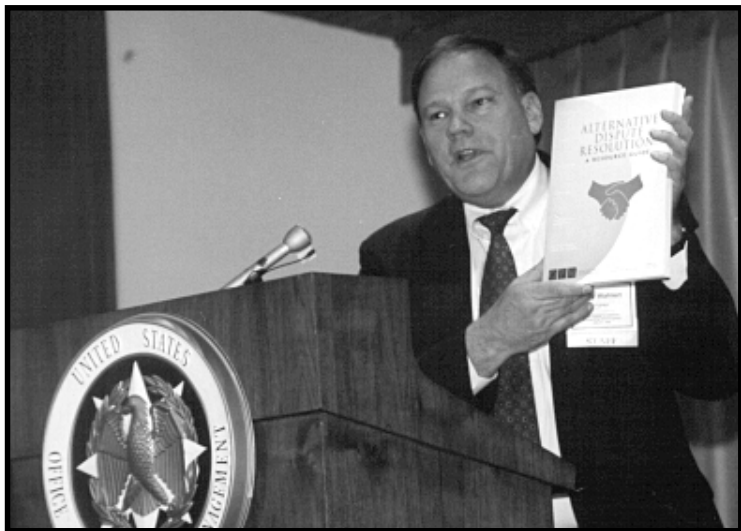
The Director spoke of OPM's long history of encouraging the increasing use of ADR for workplace disputes, and said, "I intend to carry on that tradition." She shared statistics on successful programs — time saved, cost avoidance, and the increased satisfaction reported among all parties.

"I am heartened by the strong interest in the award and the quality of the nominations we received. And I take this as more than just evidence that the ADR process indeed has firmly taken root in the Federal government — *and it is thriving.*"

Everyone who has contributed to the ADR process in large and small ways deserves to be applauded, she said, because they are making it work. "The Government is clearly a better place because of you," she said.

The keynote speaker, Attorney General Janet Reno, said about alternative dispute resolution, "I've decided to call it 'Appropriate Dispute Resolution' because it might involve negotiation. It can involve mediation. It can involve arbitration. It may involve combinations. But it is aimed at solving problems in a sensible way to provide a permanent solution."

(continued on page 2)



▲Gary Wahlert, Senior Employee Relations Specialist with OPM, explains the key features of the just-released ADR Guide.

The Attorney General remarked that this was the first time that outstanding ADR programs were being honored, how happy she was to see this growth, and she hoped it would continue in Federal agencies. And, she said, "it's fascinating to see how that growth is accepted."

She reflected that when she first raised the issue of training people to resolve disputes at Justice, she faced initial reluctance from lawyers. Their identities as trial lawyers, she believes, precluded them from seeing themselves in a problem solving role. But now they have trained over 1000 lawyers and it's catching on — people are asking about what opportunities they have for training.

"These programs are making the workplace more humane. They are saving agencies money. They are solving problems in a positive way and by doing all this, these programs are helping all of us to be better public servants. It is so wonderful to see how conflict can be resolved," the Attorney General said.

"As senior managers, we know how corrosive the adversarial process can be. Senior managers have seen the results of a process where no one agreed and a resolution was forced upon them." And regardless, she said, of how the adversity is displayed, whether it is in the administrative court or the Federal court, continuing workplace conflict endangers the

environment, when after years of struggle, one side finally "wins" and the other loses.

"All too often," said Ms. Reno, "there are only losers when the workplace has such extensive conflict. Moreover, when anger, and distress or desire for vindication, contaminate the workplace, we need effective solutions. In many cases, it may be achieved if we deal with people and their

problems first and worry about their legal decisions later."

"Dispute resolution programs emphasize respect for the individual, which I think is important. In almost every workplace, there are misunderstandings, differing perspectives, and sometimes an unfortunate lack of respect. When unresolved, these problems can become the basis for complaints that will be expensive for the agency to process and disruptive for the workplace while the complaints are pending." Too often, she commented, in the present system disputes are resolved in an unsatisfactory manner for the people involved.

"Yet if we are truly concerned about the workplace environment, this is an area where the Federal agency may receive tremendous benefits — from ADR programs," concluded the Attorney General.

Following Attorney General Reno's remarks, she and Director Lachance presented plaques to the recipients. They then gave special recognition to the three members of the Blue Ribbon Panel that reviewed award nominations.

Gary Wahlert, Senior Employee Relations Specialist with OPM, presented an overview of the newly released ADR Guide and encouraged more information sharing, something he felt would be "the future success of ADR." A reception followed the ceremony. **F**

Recipients:

Department of Air Force
Headquarters
Air Force Alternative Dispute
Resolution Program

Department of Treasury
Bureau of Engraving and Printing
Alternative Dispute Resolution
Program

Department of the Air Force
37th Training Wing
Lackland Air Force Base
Alternative Dispute Resolution
Program

Honorable Mention:

Department of Agriculture
National Finance Center
Morale Improvement Program

Department of Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Reclamation Conflict Management
Services

U.S. Postal Service
REDRESS (Resolve Employment
Disputes Reach Equitable
Solutions Swiftly)

Seattle Federal Executive Board
Intergovernmental Alternative
Dispute Resolution Consortium

Managers Support Work Schedule Flexibilities During High-Risk Pregnancy

Upon request, *FOCUS* features *Spotlight on Family Friendly Managers*. If you know a manager who deserves recognition for being family-friendly, contact the *FOCUS* editor about having an article featured.

"I want my managers, Russell Childress and Yvonne Jackson, to be featured in the *FOCUS* 'Spotlight on Family-Friendly Managers' because through a recent high risk pregnancy, my supervisors showed unfailing support," said Misti Cloman, who contacted *FOCUS* with her request.

Misti is an Administrative Assistant with the Department of Army's Ordnance Center and Schools, School of Military Packaging, at Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. She has been with the Department for 11 years, having served in her current position for nine years.

Since Misti was able to anticipate beforehand that her pregnancy would be in the "high-risk" category, she began investigating early about per-

"Not only did they let me work this schedule, my supervisors showed concern about my well-being."

sonnel options that could help her to conserve the leave she needed for close monitoring by her doctors. She also wanted to conserve leave because there was a known risk that the child could be born with a congenital heart defect. She wanted to have paid leave available to use if her child required surgery after birth.

Starting during her second month of pregnancy, her supervisor, Russell

Childress, allowed Misti to build credit hours on an alternative work schedule. In all, by working an hour late in the evenings and up to four hours over the weekends, she accumulated 53 hours of credit time during her pregnancy, all used to attend frequent medical appointments. Misti was required to have check-ups twice a week starting in the 28th week of her pregnancy and later had exams up to four times a week.

"Not only did they let me work this schedule, my supervisors showed concern about my well-being," added Misti. "First Russell Childress, and then Yvonne Jackson, who took his place after a change in command, asked me continually about how I was feeling and inquired what could be done for my comfort, such as adjusting the temperature of the room, etc."

"Based on how supportive they were in dealing with my medical condition, I felt comfortable to ask about the prospect of working some

hours on a telecommute arrangement to conserve the leave I planned to use after the delivery," said Misti.

She first contacted the OPM Family Friendly Workplace Advocacy Office (FFWAO) before approaching her supervisors about the prospect of telecommuting some hours during the ten-week period she planned for maternity leave. A specialist on the FFWAO staff answered



Misti's questions about telecommuting and was able to explain key aspects of initiating an agreement with her supervisor.

When Misti submitted her request to management via a memorandum, she attached guidelines on telecommuting downloaded from the OPM web site. She then signed a mutual agreement with her supervisors. Over the ten week period of her maternity leave, she was able to work at home for a total of 40 hours.

Even now, back to work on a regular full-time schedule since July 1999, Misti continues to feel support from her supervisors. Fortunately, her baby is healthy, with no surgery required. This alleviated her concerns about using leave, but she is taking advantage of another flexibility. Although no formal nursing mothers' program has been established at her agency, she is able to continue lactation at work by having private time in a room twice a day.

(continued on page 8)

▲ *Misti Cloman, right, poses with supervisor Yvonne Jackson at Department of Army's Aberdeen Proving Ground site in Maryland.*

White House Hosts First-Ever Conference on Mental Health with Tipper Gore

In a live televised satellite conference broadcasted June 7, 1999, in Washington, DC, the White House hosted the first-ever conference on mental health.

Mental illness impacts more than 50 million Americans and countless more family members and friends who support loved ones living with mental illness, but the issue is still not talked about openly in public. Though excellent treatments are now available, the stigma associated with mental illness makes many people reluctant to seek help.

“The White House Conference on Mental Health: Working for a Healthier America” shared some promising new initiatives to address mental health:

- the first-ever report on mental illnesses to be issued by the U.S. Office of the Surgeon General later this year;
- a new campaign to combat the stigmas surrounding mental illness and encourage people with mental illness to get help;
- an Executive Order amending the Civil Service Rules relating to Federal employees with psychiatric disabilities.

Other initiatives will be pursued: a National Caregiving Support Program and a tax credit for caregivers, along with a patient’s bill of rights.

The conference featured 14 breakout sessions, among them, ones that focused on:

- barriers to effective mental health services;
 - advances in medical research;
 - access to employment, housing, transportation, and community supports;
 - ethnic and cultural issues in mental health services delivery; and
 - online services for mental health.
- Mrs. Tipper Gore, in serving as the hostess of the White House con-

ference, joins the mental health community in working toward several objectives. Chief among them is to eradicate the stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness. Another objective is to educate Americans about the need for quality, affordable mental health care. Another objective is to see Americans being more honest and open about the problem of mental illness.

At the conference, Mrs. Gore revealed that when she first approached this subject, it confounded her that mental illnesses were often trivialized as passing personality issues, dismissed as character weaknesses, or not acknowledged at all. She was asking the same valid and compelling questions the mental health community had long been asking about how mental health is regarded in America. Why aren’t these disorders the focus of scientific attention in the same ways as cancer or heart disease? Why aren’t they covered as other illnesses are covered under health care plans? And why are we so afraid to talk about them?

Science, research, and medicine in “the Decade of the Brain” (so designated by Congressional Joint Resolution the decade beginning 1/1/90 and in a Presidential proclamation) have taught us more than ever before about the brain and the connections between mental health and physical well-being. There is now more understanding than ever before about the genetic, social, and



environmental factors that come together to cause mental illnesses.

Mrs. Gore articulated her vision in an article she wrote for publication in a national newspaper, “...let us move our medical care into the 21st century and encourage it to look at how our minds and emotions affect our bodies and our ability to recover well from surgery and disease. Let us learn all we can from the medical experts documenting the link between mental states and physical health and then make good policies out of their findings. Let us encourage affordable counseling and medically-based support groups that can stave off physical and psychological problems.”

“Let us explore elementary school programs that teach children how to manage their emotional development in healthy ways,” she continued, “thus lowering the incidence of drug addiction, suicide, and violence in adolescence. And just as importantly,” she concluded, “let us talk about mental health treatment in an up-front, matter-of-fact way so everyone can get care in an America where doing so is seen as it should be: no big deal.” **F**

OPM Program Updates Agencies About Child Support Enforcement

Heightened efforts to enforce the collections of child support payments are helping children all over the U.S. to grow up in more stable environments.

Streamlined procedures to make collections easier, along with systemic efforts to track parents delinquent in their payments, have dramatically increased the amount of money collected by families.

For some time, Federal agencies have played a key role in ensuring that child support is collected. Now Federal agencies have on hand new tools specific to operations in Federal agencies.

The Department of Health and Human Services Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), which oversees child support enforcement on state and Federal levels, produced the new tools and talked about them at a program sponsored by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) on August 5, 1999.

"New Tools for Child Support Enforcement in Federal Agencies," featured presentations by OPM and OCSE and gave participants the opportunity to learn about:

- Federal agencies' basic child support responsibilities requiring the reporting of all newly hired employees;
- provisions for withholding income to fulfill child supports obligations;
- pending legislation to automatically enroll a Federal employee's uninsured child(ren) in a health insurance plan and withhold premiums for

the child(ren), if ordered.

Important changes have occurred with regard to child support since the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, commonly referred to as "welfare reform."

The PRWORA Act's child support provisions help to establish paternity orders for children and facilitate child support orders. Key provisions stress the ability to locate noncustodial parents, secure payment by income withholding, and collect overdue child support obligations. New Federal requirements for state child support enforcement programs mandated new hire reporting and seizure of financial assets for overdue child support.

Powerful new databases now help to track delinquent parents across state lines. The Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS), maintained by the Social Security Administration, is comprised of two databases: the Federal Case Registry (FCR) and National Directory of New Hires (NDNH).

One action central to child support enforcement activities in Federal agencies preceded PRWORA. Executive Order 12953, *Actions Required of All Executive Agencies to Facilitate Payment of Child Support*,

issued February 27, 1995, directed the executive branch of the Federal government to be a "model employer" in promoting and facilitating the establishment and enforcement of child support.

The OCSE program offered participants copies of "The ABCs of Child Support: Overview for Federal Agencies," which covers basic child support functions, the new hire reporting program, income withholding, and medical support. The booklet also explains new features to help employers and provides resources for further help. "The ABCs of Child Support" companion video was also shown at the program.

Participants also received a packet of information including the OSCE handbook on child support enforcement, a list of OSCE resource materials, information about child support seminars for Federal employees, state child support office numbers, and recent magazine articles.

Carol Callahan, Special Assistant to the Director of Program Operations for the OCSE, gave an update on the New Hire Reporting Program, which began on October 1, 1997.

Employers must now send new hire data within 20 days of hire to their state directory of new hires.

State agencies must also, on a quar-

(continued on page 6)

terly basis, forward wage and unemployment insurance claimant data to the NDNH (Federal agencies send quarterly wage data directly there).

The new hire data in the NDNH is matched daily against child support case data in the Federal Case Registry to locate non-custodial parents who are living in different states than their children.

These matches are done to locate missing parents, establish paternity, establish, modify, or enforce support orders, and obtain health insurance coverage for children.

"In the first year of operation," said Ms. Callahan, "the NDNH located 1.2 million parents — approximately 26% of all non-custodial parents being sought for overdue child support. In FY98, \$14.4 billion in child support was collected -- an increase of \$6.4 billion, or 80%, since 1992."

The New Hire Reporting program, she said, delivers savings on many levels — in food stamp programs, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and also savings in unemployment insurance and workers' compensation since cross-matches at the state level identify possible fraud in these programs. In the short time that the new hire procedures have been in operation, millions of dollars have been saved in these and other program areas.

"Income withholding has proved to be the most successful and efficient enforcement tool for collecting child support," said Ms. Callahan. New features to help employees with regard to income withholding include centralized collections.

As of October 1, 1999, every state is required to operate a centralized unit for the collection and disbursement of child support payments. States are encouraging collections via electronic transmission, because it is quicker, easier, reduces processing and postage and handling costs, and provides faster delivery of payments to families.

Other presentations at the seminar included, *Progress in Legislation to*

Allow Agencies to Comply with Child Support Orders for Health Insurance Coverage, presented by Bonnie Rose, Policy Advisor, OPM's Insurance Policy and Information Division. Legislation has been introduced in Congress to give a child or children of a Federal employee automatic enrollment in the Federal employee's health benefits plan. Its passage is currently being pursued.

The complex kinds of circumstances that have surfaced in the arena of child support enforcement litigation were illustrated at the next session. Murray M. Meeker, Senior Attorney with OPM's Office of General Counsel, discussed several recent rulings in child support enforcement cases.

How might society benefit from the new child support initiatives? Children who live in more financially stable environments are healthier and more likely to stay in school and avoid trouble with the law. Not only does this promote a healthier, more productive workforce, but families receiving their just collections of child support may not have to resort to public assistance, thus lessening the tax burden of society.

The Family-Friendly Workplace Advocacy Office gave attendees a compilation of newsclips on child support enforcement, along with a packet of general information.

Access the OCSE web site at www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/. You may wish to visit the FPLS New Hire Reporting section and explore information about child support, as well as links to the web sites of states. The FPLS Info Line is (202) 401-9267.

Specific examples of increased collections:

"Connecticut's child support collections attributable to new hire reporting between October 1, 1997, and February 28, 1998, totaled \$3.8 million."

"Maryland's New Hire Registry helped the entire state collect more than \$4 million between August 1997 and February 1998." **F**

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After the birth of her first child two years ago, Ingrid Knox, an Aerospace Engineer at the Federal Aviation Administration in Fort Worth, TX, initiated what she calls “creative child care” for situations where she would be on job-related travel.

Ingrid, who has been with the agency for 14 years, travels about 30% of the time with her job. The pattern, however, tends to be unpredictable. “I may travel one week a month to three weeks a month or one day a month. It varies,” explains Ingrid.

In seeking a pool of qualified caregivers for job-related travel situations, she joined organizations where she got to know senior women who might be interested in traveling with her and caring for her daughter, Calea, while she was on duty.

Among the women she became friends with, she looked closely at how they interacted with Calea. If her daughter seemed to like the senior and Ingrid sensed that the senior truly cared about her child, she, once she felt she knew them well, approached her with the unique kind of “mutual arrangement.” Her senior friends could take advantage of free travel in exchange for watching her child while she was at work.

Ingrid chooses not to call her friends “nannies” because she doesn’t view it as an employment situation. She defines it as a situation where the seniors, her friends, work *with* her and not *for* her. “Also, these women, my friends, are like mother figures. Calea sees them as a grandmother figure and I find that, for myself, I enjoy having a mother figure around, too.”

To be fair to her senior friends, she surveyed local day care programs about their rates of pay. “I cover their travel, meals, and entertainment and I give them spending money. One of the women, however, likes to cook, so that works out well since I usually book suites,” said Ingrid (the single lodging suite is shared and therefore covered by the agency).

Ingrid works with three women in particular. The seniors she travels

with are all in good health and have continued in their educations, as she has. All are widows in their 60s and early 70s, with children and grandchildren of their own. One is a retired school teacher. One is a retired professional from Texas Instruments and retired from the ministry. One is a friend of her mother’s.

Ingrid says, “This situation works out well for me. It means a lot to me to be able to see Calea at lunch and in the evenings. I came up with this idea because I was nursing but I also believe that my daughter needs to be with me. My husband really enjoys keeping the baby, too, but I think the situation we have is more beneficial all around — to my daughter, myself, and for the senior, too!”

While Ingrid is at work, the room is set up like a day care environment with a lot of toys. Calea’s daytime activities also involve reading and using phonics cards, and maybe getting outdoors in the stroller.

When Ingrid travels by car, which is how she usually travels to her destinations, they’ll stop at points of interest along the way. “We enjoy the sightseeing we do. Recently we visited the Grand Canyon in traveling back from Arizona and we stopped in Chicago in traveling back from Indiana. The situation encourages me to do things I wouldn’t normally do if I was by myself. If I was on travel by myself, I probably would not venture out to points of interest alone and I think I’d catch the earliest return flight possible in order to get home. With them around, I try to make it fun for all of us.”

Bessie Lyons, one of Ingrid’s senior friends, travels with Ingrid 2-3 times a year and feels that it has always been a good experience. Bessie said, “I really enjoy traveling with Ingrid. She is inspirational to be around.” Bessie added that she



Federal Employee Uses Creative Approach to Child Care During Job Travel

enjoys, too, visiting cities she normally wouldn’t travel to, though her membership in a sorority gives her opportunities to travel. She was especially fond of a trip to Florida last year where they took the time to stop at Disney World. On that trip, Bessie was able to bring along her grandson.

As a retired school teacher who currently teaches adult literacy courses, Bessie commented about how important she feels it is for babies to get educational experiences early on. When she is caring for Calea, they count, sing songs, and she reads to her. Bessie offers another benefit in being a teacher, still certified. When Calea soon starts in a school located across the street from Ingrid’s work, where she can miss up to 20 days from class, she will receive qualified tutoring from a certified teacher.

The current circumstances may change as Calea gets older. One who knows Ingrid, though, could bet that over the years she will employ many other creative approaches to optimize her child’s development. **F**

▲ Pictured above is Ingrid Knox and inset her senior friend Bessie Lyons who sometimes travels with her.

Federal Agency Among Employers Recognized for Commuter Assistance



▲ The award for telework is presented by (left to right) Master of Ceremonies and Mayor of the City of Takoma Park, Kathryn Porter and Maryland Delegate, Joan Pitkin, to Agriculture representatives Don Bay (center), Martha Farrar and Linda Buckles (far right).

The Washington, DC metropolitan area is rated among the worst in the U.S. for traffic congestion. Fortunately, a local nonprofit organization, Commuter Connections, works continually on multiple levels to encourage less vehicle travel. In targeting the cooperation of area employers, Commuter Connections has for the second year now honored employers that encourage commuting alternatives to vehicle travel.

At the 1999 Commuter Connections Employee Recognition Awards ceremony, that took place on June 23, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) received the Telework Award for their Flexible Workplace Program.

Three different telework arrangements are available at the agency: short-term arrangements created on a case-by-case basis, long-term arrangements with designated weekly telework days, and medical/disability arrangements that allow employees to work when they are not mobile. Employees may work from home or

telework centers.

The agency first provides employees with an orientation packet. A handbook lays out the ground rules for telework. Then, in a spirit of mutual understanding, an agreement is signed by both the manager and employee. Currently, 56 employees participate in the long-term telework program at NASS, thus eliminating 7,488 trips to-and-from-work annually.


Commuter Connections gives other awards in the categories of incentives and marketing. Employers considered for the award encourage through marketing and/or incentives commuting options like ridesharing, using transit, bicycling, and other commuting choices that reduce single-occupant vehicle use.

A Selection Committee, made up of representatives from nine local organizations (government and nonprofit) is formed to choose the winners. Decisions are based on the following criteria :

- benefits to the employer and employee
- economic and financial benefits

- reduction of gasoline and consumption of emissions.

Reduced vehicle travel offers many benefits that contribute to improved quality of life. Among them are better air quality, less traffic congestion, decreased demand for road repairs, and fewer car accidents. Commuter Connections, providing commuter assistance to the Washington DC metropolitan region for 25 years, works jointly with the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board in sponsoring the award.


For more information about the organization, contact (800) 745-7433 or visit the web site at www.commuterconnections.org. 

Manager Spotlight

(continued from page 3)

“The work schedule and workplace flexibilities I was able to take advantage of during my pregnancy and immediately after to conserve my leave is a great benefit of Federal employment,” she said. “It made an already stressful pregnancy, less stressful.”

The final sentiments Misti expressed ring true to the essence of having family-friendly flexibilities: “These flexibilities are great incentive to stay with the job. It makes me feel good about my employer because they were good to me and considerate of me through an already stressful time of my life. The job in no way added to my stress.”

In depicting what sounds like a win-win situation, Misti concluded: “And I feel inspired to work harder since my family is taken care of and my employer helped me to achieve that. I also think that having a supportive work environment has been conducive to my physical well-being in dealing with my illness, which is now in remission.” 

Commuter Fair at Department of Labor

While the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) is busy looking out for the welfare of the American worker, it isn't neglecting the welfare of its own employees.

DOL was concerned about the large number of agency employees affected by significant, long-term construction just begun on a major highway interchange in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The eight year construction project will require lane closures during peak periods of commuter travel. Considering that 370,000 vehicles travel through this interchange each day, travel delays affecting an even greater number will be inevitable.

In response, the DOL WorkLife Center hosted a Transportation Fair on June 16, 1999, featuring various commuter options and resources.

Seventeen exhibitors were on hand to provide information to employees about buses, trains, van pools, and car pools. An organization of commuter van pools parked one of their commuter vans just outside in the building courtyard for employees to examine. Representatives from the Washington



and answered questions about working at alternative work sites.

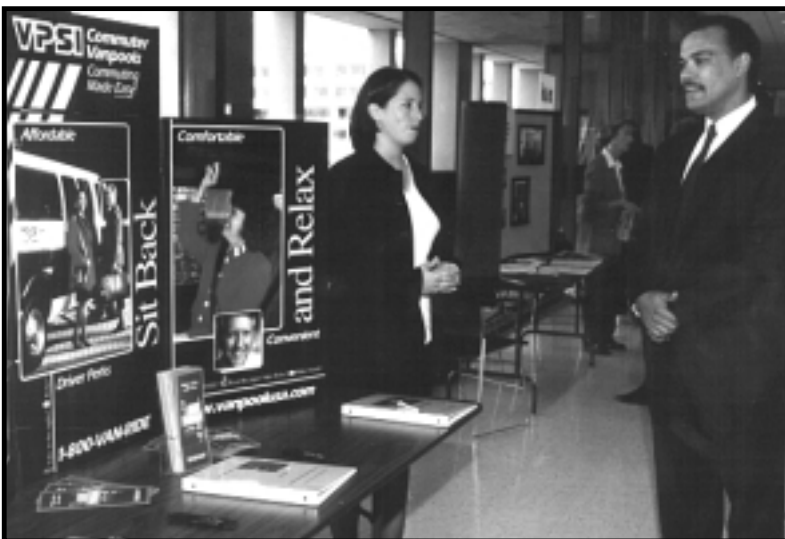
The Department's Business Operations Center was available to talk to interested employees about how to qualify for various commuter subsidies from the agency. Washington Metropolitan Area

As a follow-up to the Fair, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) consolidated information on new and expanded alternative commuter programs that will be phased in to give commuters choices in avoiding the construction delays:

- new parking lots at transit sites
- cooperative agreements with local businesses on joint-use parking lots
- discounts on bus/rail passes
- a new afternoon train
- new bus routes
- lower-priced van pools
- help forming car pools
- private customized bus service with initial subsidies to assist with the start-up
- teleworking options
- new "commuter stores" for convenient, one-stop shopping to obtain ticket information, tickets, tokens, and passes for the many different transportation options available in the metro area.

▲ In attendance at the Transportation Fair was Department of Labor Acting Deputy Director Edward Montgomery, pictured above interacting with the WorkLife staff who sponsored the event. He visited each of the 17 exhibits while there.

◀ Below, he is pictured at the exhibit which featured the DOL Transit Subsidy.



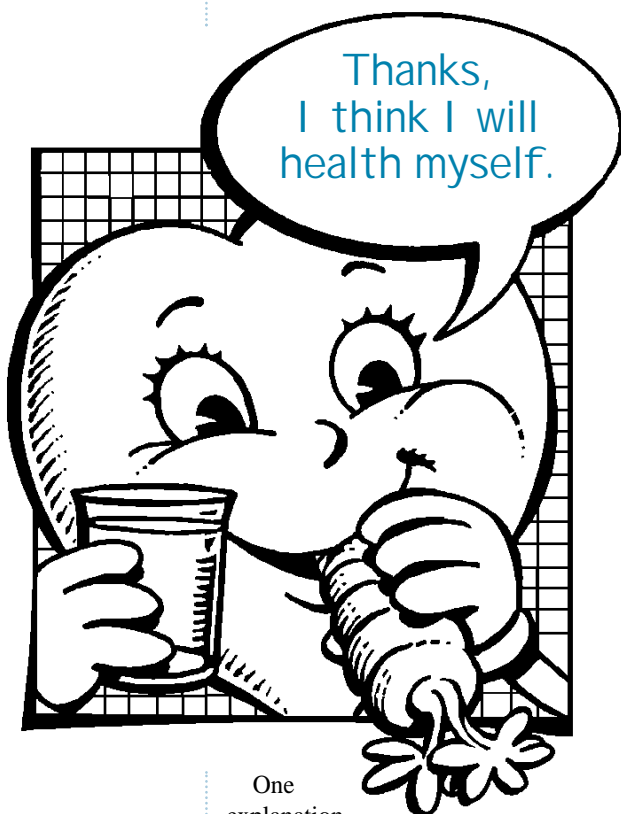
Metropolitan Area Telecenters provided information about working in area telecenters. The WorkLife Center staff had copies of the recently negotiated Article 10, Flexiplace, to distribute

Transit Authority used this opportunity to promote their new "rechargeable farecard program" and posted a banner day by selling 25 of these cards to DOL employees.

Employees attending the Fair were interested in learning more about alternate modes of transportation and enjoyed the opportunity to talk to exhibitors about various options. **F**

Study Reveals Worksite Nutrition Interventions More Successful than Ones for Smoking Cessation

Findings from a recent study revealed that worksite nutrition programs can positively impact workers' dietary choices. In comparison, anti-smoking interventions conducted simultaneously at worksites were less successful.



One explanation for these findings is that over the last decade, smoking interventions at the worksite have already made a lot of headway. This suggests that more intensive strategies may be required for further progress with smoking cessation. But with nutrition interventions at worksites, there may still be room for improvement.

The Working Well Trial, described as "the largest worksite cancer control trial in the United States," focused on changing employees' consumption of fat and fiber and promoting smoking cessation at the worksite. But rather than focusing, as many worksite programs have, on modifying *individual behaviors*, the Working Well Trial went beyond and

focused as well on opportunities to enhance the physical and social environment of the worksite.

Researchers designing the study considered that people spend a large portion of their lives in their workplace. If this environment is used effectively, they supposed, it could influence healthy behavior changes. Staff from four research centers conducted the Working Well Trial at dozens of U.S. worksites, exposing thousands of workers to various on-the-job and anti-smoking interventions.

Nutrition interventions were aimed at making lower fat, higher fiber foods more accessible in vending machines and cafeterias. On smoking, environmental changes centered around increasing restrictions on smoking at the workplace.

Interventions aimed at the individual behavior change went beyond the usual print materials, posters, and groups or classes to learn about nutrition. At each worksite a group of employees (employee advisory boards) worked in partnership with a

vention, contests were held that encouraged smokers and nonsmokers to learn about the dangers of smoke, and to support a smoker who is trying to quit.

In the end, data collected from 111 intervention and control worksites participating in the Working Well Trial, revealed that nutrition interventions at the worksite were more successful than smoking cessation interventions.

The journal article stated, "Results indicated significant effects of the intervention on all nutrition outcomes: access to healthy food, nutritional information at work, and social norms regarding dietary choice. Significant benefits were not found for smoking norms or smoking policies."

In explaining why the smoking interventions did not result in measurable change, the journal article said, "The limit of change by these relatively low-cost, short-term worksite interventions may have already been reached by the larger, anti-smoking campaign taking place in U.S. communities. With dietary

...activities included taste tests and recipe contests using popular recipes that replaced high fat ingredients with lower fat choices.

professional interventionist to design activities that provided interactive ways to learn in a positive, entertaining manner.

These activities included taste tests and recipe contests using popular recipes that replaced high fat ingredients with lower fat choices. Other contests challenged participants to "Rate Your Plate" for nutritional value and "Name the Fruits and Vegetables" by identifying the fruits and vegetables contained in dishes. For smoking cessation inter-

behavior, however, there may still be room for movement."

The final data of the Working Well Trial also suggests that individual behavior can be affected by interventions aimed at fostering norms for the organizational environment. The article indicated that the study added "support for the ecological approach to health promotion."

The article appears in the August issue of *Health Education and Behavior*, a journal of the Society for Public Health Education. **F**



SOELR *is Coming!!!*

The Office of Personnel Management's annual Symposium on Employee and Labor Relations (SOELR) is currently in the planning stages. OPM expects to offer this popular conference in early to mid-March of 2000 with the exact time and location to be announced in October 1999.

The latest information about SOELR 2000 can be obtained by calling us at 202-606-4446, emailing us at soelr@opm.gov, or visiting the OPM web site at www.opm.gov/er.

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11th ANNUAL
ART AND SCIENCE OF HEALTH PROMOTION CONFERENCE
MARCH 6-11, 2000

Colorado Springs, CO
The Broadmoor

Sponsored by the American Journal of Health Promotion. The theme for the conference is "Individual Health and Organizational Productivity: Relationships are the Key."

Pre-conference and intensive training sessions are available. Take \$50 off if the core conference fee is paid before October 1, 1999. To register, call (248) 682-0707, fax (248) 682-1212.

FOCUS

On Upcoming Events

November

National Alzheimer's Awareness Month

Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association
919 North Michigan Avenue, Suite #1000
Chicago, IL 60611-1676
(800) 272-3900

Diabetic Eye Disease Month

Prevent Blindness America
500 East Remington Road
Schaumburg, IL 60173
(800) 331-2020

National Diabetes Month

American Diabetes Association
1660 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(800) 232-3472

21-27

National Adoption Week

National Council for Adoption
1930 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 328-1200

18

Great American Smokeout

American Cancer Society
National Headquarters
1599 Clifton Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30329-4251
(800) ACS-2345

December

National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month

3D Prevention Month Coalition
1900 L. Street, NW, Suite #705
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 452-6004

Safe Toys and Gifts Month

Prevent Blindness America
500 East Remington Road
Schaumburg, IL 60173
(800) 331-2020

1-7

National Aplastic Anemia Awareness Week

Aplastic Anemia Foundation of America, Inc.
P.O. Box 613
Annapolis, MD 21404
(800) 747-2820

1

World AIDS Day

American Association for World Health
1825 K. Street, NW, Suite 1208
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 747-2820



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