

The Northern Plains Area Secretarial Advisory Council (NPASAC) met March 3, 1998 in Ft. Collins, Colorado, to continue working on the goals set at the previous meeting. The Council reviewed the reasons it was formed: To assist secretaries (those already on board and new) with day-to-day procedures, to support programs that encourage professionalism amongst secretaries, and serve as an information source as needed.

One meeting was held in 1997. It was decided that council members remain in their current assignments. Olga Lee replaced Sue Thornburg as the NSAC Representative and Technical Advisor to NPASAC when Sue retired June 30, 1997. Members for 1997-98 and their duties are:

Kathleen Aragon, Laramie, Wyoming
 Louise Dalton, Fort Collins, Colorado - Chair
 Sandy Mathewson, Manhattan, Kansas
 Sharon Peterson, Grand Forks, North Dakota – Recorder
 Jan Preston, Lincoln, Nebraska
 Olga Lee, Fort Collins, Colorado - Technical Advisor

Accomplishments

- The Directory of Volunteer Resources, a listing of secretaries to serve as mentors to other secretaries in specialized areas was revised; updated; and distributed to secretaries and will be used in the informational packet to be given to new secretaries. Volunteer response was excellent.
- The New Secretary Welcome Package was reviewed. The welcome letter has been revised and is ready for inclusion in the secretarial packet. The letter with the revisions provides some very helpful and practical information for new secretaries which is intended to keep them from feeling isolated. The enclosures to the welcome letter that make up the packet include: a copy of the NPASAC Charter; a list of council members with locations, phone numbers and e-mail addresses; the current Resource Assistants list with locations, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses; and the NSAC *Training and Planning Guide for ARS Secretarial/Clerical Personnel*.
- Provisions for follow-up have been made to enable new secretaries to ask questions, give feedback, receive adequate orientation and in-house training at the Area Office and become generally familiar with the sections they will be dealing with on numerous matters. The Area Director's secretary, Olga Lee, will personally call each new secretary to extend a welcome.
- Method of communication between secretaries has been provided. A list server was formed and a Home Page is being developed. After the Home Page is up and running, pertinent information of value to secretaries will be added as it becomes available.
- As influenced by NPASAC and Total Quality Service training in Ft. Collins last year, a Colorado-Wyoming secretarial group has been formed which meets monthly. These meetings are supported by Dr. Blackburn, NPA Area Director and sponsored by Dr. Roos, NPA Acting Assistant Area Director. In conjunction with these meetings, several in-house training sessions have been provided by Area Office personnel. Sessions on T&A procedures (and prevention of T&A errors), Travel, and ARMPs have been conducted. A session on RMIS is planned for the near future.
- A secretarial handbook is being developed. The Council is using the handbook developed by the NAA as a guide and is modifying it to serve the NPA.

Goals

- Continue to provide mentoring, orientation, and basic in-house training for all newly hired secretaries in addition to refresher sessions for those already on board.
- Continue to provide assistance to the NSAC.
- Promote programs in support of professionalism in the secretarial field.
- Identify and provide outside training courses of particular value to secretaries and continue to encourage networking with peers.
- Continue working on the secretarial handbook that is presently in the process of being tailored to the needs of the NPA.
- Decide at some point on a reevaluation of the Council's efforts to determine if goals are being accomplished. Also, through feedback, learn whether or not secretaries think the help they receive is worthwhile.