

Agricultural Research Service National Secretarial Advisory Council News

Volume 1, Issue 2

February 1998

REE COUNCIL UPDATE

As reported in the last newsletter, the Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics (REE) recently established a Research, Education, and Economics Secretarial and Clerical Coordinating Council (REE-SCCC) as recommended by the REE Secretarial and Clerical Program Results Team. The Council consists of two secretarial and clerical representatives from each of the REE mission area agencies (Agricultural Research Service; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; Economics Research Service; and the National Agricultural Statistics Service), a representative from Administrative and Financial Management, and a representative from the Under Secretary's Office. Mary Silva and Janet Ferst (until her retirement 12/31/97) represent ARS on the Council.

The mission of the REE-SCCC is to serve the REE mission area, its administrators, and management by providing information and recommendations on initiatives that affect secretarial and clerical employees across the mission area. The Council will seek opportunities to enhance the secretarial and clerical profession through training, mentoring, and recognition and to build a bridge of communications across the REE mission area.



The ARS National Secretarial Advisory Council (NSAC) has been and continues to be the role model for the REE-SCCC and the other mission areas that are in the process of establishing secretarial councils. The REE-SCCC members are working to build a network of support across Agency lines.

Information about the REE-SCCC will soon be distributed to all REE secretarial and clerical support staff. Any questions or comments about the Council can be sent to Mary Silva (msilva@nal.usda.gov).

SECRETARIAL RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Several Areas have had secretarial recognition programs in place for some time and some Areas have recently implemented their own recognition programs. The Headquarters Secretarial Recognition Program has been modified to include all Area Office and Area Administrative Office Secretaries who are not eligible to receive the award in their Area. NSAC and the Human Resources Division developed new guidelines for the revised recognition program. The winners for 1996-1997 are:

- Headquarters Secretary of the Year, 1996 -- Patricia McGarvey,

Office of the
Deputy
Administrator,
AFM, Washington,
D.C.

- Headquarters Secretary of the Year, 1997 -- Joyce Smith, Area Director's Office, North Atlantic Area, Wyndmoor, PA.
- Beltsville Area, 1996 -- Claudette Joyner, Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center, Beltsville, MD.
- Beltsville Area, 1997 -- Linda Stoner, Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center, Beltsville, MD.
- Mid South Area, 1996 -- Linda L. Deer, Southern Regional Research Center, New Orleans, LA.
- Mid South Area, 1997 -- Eunice C. Hutchinson, Southern Regional Research Center, New Orleans, LA.
- Midwest Area, 1997 -- Deborah K. Bitner, National Center for Agricultural
- South Atlantic Area, 1997 -- Kay Carr, Insect Biology & Population Management Research Laboratory, Tifton, GA
- Southern Plains Area, 1997 -- Ruth Treat, Plant Science and Water Conservation Research Laboratory, Stillwater, OK

CHANGE IN PUBLICATION TITLE

The monthly magazine, "The Secretary," published by Professional Secretaries International (PSI), has a title change.

PSI says: "Today's office is changing ... so are we. For more than 50 years, we've made a name for ourselves. Now it's time for a new one. Meet "OfficePRO," the magazine of ideas, strategies, and technology for today's office

what your title, you're an OfficePRO. The new OfficePRO will serve a bigger market, have a snappier, more readable design, and even more great editorial ideas."

COMPUTER TIPS Did You Know...

In Windows 95 you can copy files to a floppy disk by: (1) Open My Computer or Windows Explorer; (2) Select the file(s) you want to copy; (3) Choose the File menu OR Point to the selection and click the secondary mouse button; (4) Choose Send TO; (5) Select the desired drive.

NSAC Newsletter Subcommittee members are:

Elaine McGuire, Chair, Beltsville Area
Marcia Jenkins, Midwest Area
Joyce Smith, North Atlantic Area
Sandra Warren, Mid South Area

(Please contact the subcommittee if you'd like to contribute an article that supports the NSAC's mission -- mcguire@ars.usda.gov.)

"Use of a company or product name by the Department does not imply approval or recommendation of the product to the exclusion of others which also may be suitable."

"The United States Department of

- Utilization
Research, Peoria,
IL.
- Northern Plains
Area, 1996 -- Polly
L. McMichael, Red
River Valley
Agricultural
Research Center,
Fargo, ND.
 - Northern Plains
Area, 1997 --
Sandra S.
Mathewson, Grain
Marketing &
Production
Research Center,
Manhattan, KS
 - Pacific West Area,
1997 -- Elisabeth
"Libby" Fouse,
Horticultural Crops
Research
Laboratory, Fresno,
CA.

professionals."

"If you're a secretary, an
administrative assistant, or
an office manager, you're
an 'OfficePRO.' For years,
you've turned to 'The
Secretary,' published by
PSI for the latest
innovations and trends in
the office workplace.

But today's office is
changing, and office
professionals answer to a
variety of titles. OfficePRO
encompasses them all. No
matter

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Agriculture, U.S. Department of
Agriculture, Washington, DC, 20250, or
call (202)720-7327 (voice) or (202)720-
1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal
employment opportunity employer."

PASTG NEWSLETTER - December 22, 1998

REMARKS FROM THE CO-CHAIRS:

It's hard to believe that another year has passed by so quickly. 1998 has been eventful for the PASTG and the Secretarial Support Group of the Midwest Area. March marked the first ever Midwest Area Secretarial Meeting devoted entirely to this workforce series. The meeting was received with high acclaims from both its participants as well as invited guests that attended. During the meeting numerous individuals were recognized for their participation in the Mentoring program and recognition was given to two employees that offered support to one of our locations during a period that they were without clerical assistance. Lori Wilson-Voss, Ames, Iowa was awarded the Midwest Area Secretary of the Year. In addition, Alice McCain, Urbana, IL stepped down as representative to the West Lafayette, IN/Urbana, IL locations and Lona Jean Strickland, W. Lafayette, IN was appointed her replacement. Thanks again Alice, for all of your hard work!!

At the meeting, the Standard Operating Procedure Manual (SOP) created by the PASTG was distributed to all that attended. In addition, members of the National Committee as well as Headquarters personnel received a copy. We have learned that at the National Secretarial Advisory Council annual meeting, they recommended that the MWA SOP be used as a standard and reference for other ARS Secretarial Task Groups. This speaks highly of the MWA PASTG and all of you that assisted us in reviewing this document.

The PASTG would like to thank each of you for your support throughout the year. Without you we would be unable to accomplish the tasks and goals that we have set. On behalf of the members of the group, we wish you a Happy Holiday Season and the very best for a wonderful New Year!

Sherri Buxton & Lori Wilson-Voss, Co-Chairs

REORGANIZATION OF THE AREA ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE - contributed by Mike Horn

On July 27, 1998, the FY99 Midwest Area AD/AAO Preliminary Budget and Staffing Plan was sent to Dr. Edward B. Knipling, Associate Administrator. It was immediately approved and the changes were placed on the launching pad. This meant the complete Reorganization of the Area Administrative office and the Area Director's office. It has also meant Change. Oh boy! Change. what a wonderful fruit.

On October 1st, four positions (the people went with them) were moved to the National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research. Those positions were the Personnel Clerk, One Automation Assistant, Purchasing Agent, and Accounting Technician. The following positions were created; Agreements Specialist, Administrative Assistant, and Procurement Assistant. The Agreements Specialist has just been advertised.

In addition, the position of Personnel Assistant, has been advertised and will be filled to provide support to the locations. We will miss Marie Bishop; hopefully, she will get just as excited over her new job as EEO Manager. If not, the second floor hallways will be pretty quiet. The Program Analyst and Budget Analyst positions were combined into one

position that Pat Bothast will efficiently handle. The Area Engineer, Steve DeNardis, will continue to be BD NCAUR and BD Area.

What has all of this meant? It has meant a complete overhaul of the offices - painting, shuffling of furniture, etc. Ever since the word streamline came on the scene, we have had a number of people trying to do the work of two, sometimes three. This will finally put an end to the multiple job syndrome.

What does this all mean for the customer. We feel that this will mean improved customer service and quality management. Our true test will be your assessment of how we are doing. So let us know how we can better serve you!

WELCOME - contributed by Jean Sparks

Heather Pace is the new secretary for the Plant Genetics Unit in Columbia, MO. Heather had worked for the City of Columbia in various departments since 1981; she completed her B.Sc. in business administration in 1986. Heather officiates volleyball at the college level and also trains new officials. She also serves as Secretary on the Board of Directors of a local credit union. We are very happy to have Heather join our Columbia Location.

GOOD LUCK & BEST WISHES!

Pam Hubacher, Secretary for the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center has informed our office that she will be leaving to accept a promotion with another government agency. The best of luck to you Pam and you will be missed!

Mary Cole, Office Automation Assistant for the Area Administrative Office is retiring effective December 31. Mary has been with ARS approximately 11 years and has supported various areas including the Center (Peoria). Mary will be missed and especially all her goodies!

A FEW REMARKS FROM THE NEW PASTG COUNCIL MEMBER - SEDINA
LOWE

During October 26-29, 1998, I attended my first meeting as a member of the PASTG Committee. I had been on a conference call with the committee but had not met them all in person. I was made to feel very welcome and comfortable by the committee and the directors. Dr. Dunkle and Dr. Hewings joined us to outline what they wanted the committee to work on. Together we accomplished a lot of work in a short period of time.

NOMINATION MATERIALS FOR THE MIDWEST AREA SECRETARY OF THE
YEAR AWARD

NATURE OF THE AWARD

The purpose of the MWA Secretary of the Year Award Program is to annually recognize the outstanding achievements and creative efforts of ARS secretaries and clerks in the Midwest Area.

A monetary award as well as a plaque will be awarded to the recipient of the award.

NOMINATION CRITERIA

To be considered for this award, the following criteria must be met:

Nominee must be classified in a secretarial or clerical position (318/326/322/303 series).
Nominee must have received an outstanding or superior rating during their last performance evaluation.

The nomination must show evidence of achievement well beyond normal job performance during the past year and must indicate how work performed has substantially improved the operation of an organizational unit.

Suggested categories and examples are:

Organizational Achievement - Overall achievement; such as initiatives taken in successfully reorganizing office procedures, improving filing or other systems or mastering or promoting use of new office equipment, etc., which result in improved productivity.

Skill Advancement - Initiatives taken to substantially improve or acquire skills beyond job qualifications, such as individual educational pursuits or taking the lead in the enhancement of office-wide productivity and skill improvement. Achievement should include any personal activity the results of which are taught or shared with the work unit.

Person to Person Relationships - Establishment of exceptional inter- and intra-unit working relationships that assist a unit in accomplishing its mission, training co-workers and others, and promoting teamwork.

NOTE: Our secretaries may be nominated for any achievement that was well beyond normal job performance. The achievement does not have to fall into a specific "category." These examples have been provided to help nominators develop the justification.

NOMINATION PROCEDURES

Nominations for the Midwest Area Secretary of the Year Award must be prepared in the format as shown on the attached nomination form. Peer nominations as well as nominations by supervisors are encouraged. Only permanent employees are eligible. The Midwest Area Director's Secretaries (Area, Associate, Assistant) are ineligible to receive the Area Award. Deadline for submission of nominations will be January 29, 1999.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

The Selection Committee for the MWA Secretary of the Year Award will consist of the Area Director's Secretaries, the Area Directors, Union Representation, the recipient of the previous year award and the Area Administrative Officer. Committee members will reach a decision by consensus.