



DISPOSITION

THE NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO THE INITIATIVES OF THE GSA PROPERTY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

“The first source of supply!”

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GSA Helps Showcase Nature in Pennsylvania

It is a brisk, sun-splattered morning in the early autumn of 2009, as a lone vehicle passes over the crest of the Conyngham Ridge of the Blue Mountains of northeastern Pennsylvania and heads north along PA Route 42 into the valley beyond. The passage over the ridge could not be more dramatic: on one side lies the shadowed remains of the once proud Anthracite coal mining town of Centralia—a town literally “burnt-out” and left in ruins by a still-burning underground coal fire that menaced and displaced all the townsfolk; on the other side lies the vehicle’s sun-drenched destination—the pristine woodlands of the Roaring Creek valley that beckon like a comfortable blanket of green moss as far as the eye can see. Here, at the trough of this fine valley, busy foresters of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) have set up shop to create public access to the woodlands that comprise the Weiser State Forest-Roaring Creek Tract, with the help of federal excess property obtained by the U.S. Forest Service through GSA’s Property Management Program. It is no small task. But as the driver of the vehicle this day, GSA Area Property Officer (APO), Bob Kitsock, disembarks at the soon-to-be entrance to the forest, he realizes that the task at hand is a labor of love for the DCNR foresters to share nature’s rich bounty—and what a bounty it is! The foresters are in the midst of grading land, laying stone, building culverts, and designing entrances, parking lots, pathways, and recreational facilities—in nature-friendly “minimalist” fashion using excess equipment—in the 9,000 acres that make up the spectacular Roaring Creek Tract. The tract features crystal lakes, a huge reservoir, mountain trails, deep gorges, green forested lands, and even a converted lake house and hunting chateau. The landscape hints at the privately-owned origins of the woodland that was obtained from the

- “Customer Service” Issue**
- Nature’s Showcase
 - Where There’s a Customer
 - One Person’s Junk
 - GSA & FEMA Partner
 - APO Confessions
 - A Retirement Tribute

McWilliams estate by the state for public use. Now, with the help of reutilized excess federal property obtained through GSAXcess®—including bulldozers, dump trucks, graders, loaders, generators, pumps, and other assorted equipment and materials—the foresters can make what was once deemed an immense undertaking into a firm reality—with equally real savings, estimated at over \$1 million. Forester Mike Mazur spared no praise when he said, “We could not have started this project without the excess property that we got from GSA. *That* property made it all possible. I cannot even begin to calculate the benefits we will get—especially for the general public—for years to come. Thank you, GSA.” After an extensive tour of the grounds and a fond farewell to the host, the APO drives his vehicle back over the ridge of the valley, but not before stopping to allow himself one last fleeting glimpse of the Roaring Creek Tract: “Beautiful,” was the only word that came to mind, as he thought about the harmony that exists between nature and humankind when the interests, values, and dreams of people—especially those in government—coalesce to achieve a better place for all.



GSA excess property: helping to showcase nature at Roaring Creek

GSA Property Names APO and Allocator of the Year

The GSA Property Division named Steve Olds from Region 3 (Philadelphia) and Shelia Blunt of Region 4 (Atlanta) as Area Property Officer and Property Allocator of the year, respectively, at the U&D Conference in Denver, Colorado, in November 2009. Both employees were touted for their

excellent contributions to the program: Steve for his keen insight into compliance and eligibility issues in the federal surplus program and Shelia for the consistently high quality of her work in the allocation of surplus property from Maine to Florida. Other employees receiving special recognition at the Denver event included Lori Marrs and Debra Laffoon (team efforts), Bob Kitsock (program promotion), and Nancy Brotherton (NASA artifacts IT interface).

Where there's a Customer, there's a Way in Arizona

Sometimes GSA colleagues in the federal personal property program go above and beyond the call of duty for customers and through their sheer will to succeed achieve extraordinary results. Here's a perfect example: This past year, the Defense Reutilization Marketing Service (DRMS) had four truck-mounted cranes that were used in military operations in the Middle East and that, upon completion of their assignments, were destined for the scrap heap. This was due to the "De-mil" (military-sensitive) designations that were attached to the units that required them to be dismantled and rendered inoperable. In effect, the cranes—with a unit value of \$194,500 each—would be destroyed. When the Area Property Officer (APO) in Arizona, Randy Patterson, got wind of the situation through a local air museum—Pima Air Museum—operating under the auspices of the State Agency for Surplus Property (SASP) in Tucson, he jumped at the opportunity to find a way to reuse the property. Randy's quest for a solution took him almost nationwide—from calls to the DRMS headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan, to coordination with the Defense Reutilization Marketing Office in Arizona, until he was able to convince authorities that the De-Mil designations should be changed to De-Mil "Q" (dual-use: military-commercial allowed). The moral of the story is that if you try and try again—and this was pure *hustle* by Randy—good things can happen. And, in fact, they did! Currently, two of the cranes are being used by the DOL-Corps of Engineers for construction projects. One crane is on public display at the Smithsonian Institute. One is on display at the Pima Air Museum. All are being reused. And that's not all: Due to Randy's efforts the process for coding items is now being reviewed on a case-by-case basis by DRMS to provide the greatest of reutilization opportunities. Thanks to Randy, GSA saved \$778,000 for the public through the smart "reuse" of government assets. That's the "way" to go!

THE COLOR OF LEARNING

If "green" means recycling, then the Computers For Learning (CFL) program must be an emerald hue! For the latest tints and tones about CFL system enhancements or school eligibility guidelines, you can call 703-605-2873 or connect with the website at www.computersforlearning.gov to learn how your agency can transfer used computer equipment to schools. It's all about that color of learning. Brilliant!

Customer Quote of the Quarter

**To: GSA Personal Property Center, Springfield, Virginia,
From: Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC**

"Our visit . . . went well and we obtained most of the items we needed. I would like to let you know that (your) facility has improved greatly . . . Everything went very smoothly . . . Every dollar that we save through this process is another dollar that can be used for the National Zoological Park Conservation and Research efforts. Thanks . . ."

- Libby Dougan, SI Mgmt. Support Specialist

One Person's Junk is Another's, Ah, Peach Thinner

It has often been said that "one person's junk is another person's treasure," but certainly this little axiom of life rarely has been taken to so dramatic a translation as it was this past year by the folks at the USDA Appalachian Fruit Research Station (AFRS) in Kearneysville, West Virginia. The AFRS spotted—let's call it—an "operationally-challenged" vehicle that was reported in 2008 as "salvage" on GSAXcess®--GSA's national personal property inventory system. The folks at AFRS, with the help of their friends at GSA, then obtained the antiquated item for reuse this year at their research sites located in Kearneysville, WV, and Biglerville, Pennsylvania. The item had an original acquisition value of \$162 thousand, but bore little resemblance—in value or design—to the handy, agricultural machine that it would soon become. Apparently, AFRS saw some hidden virtue in the hulk of metal and gears—that was originally a "Ditch Witch" trenching machine used initially by the military at the Army depot in Chambersburg, PA—and decided to reconstruct the vehicle for agricultural purposes. In the end, nothing short of a "miracle" could describe the work that the AFRS folks accomplished with excess property. The AFRS not only salvaged a rusting piece of scrap machinery, but fixed the motor and transmission, reconfigured the assembly, built a spike drum "shaker" for the unit, and ultimately transformed the item into a fully-operational "peach thinner." Overall, total repairs cost around \$500 to get the item running, with an additional \$6,000 to make it "field-ready," including over 100 hours of labor. And, if this Lazarus-like resurrection is not enough to "shake your tree," let us not forget that AFRS and GSA have gone to the "core" of effective property stewardship by recycling equipment and yielding results that will ensure many years of public service for the machine in the fruit groves of Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Peachy!

AFRS "Peach Thinner" (Before & After)



“Partners” Provide a Ray of Sunshine to Customers

The GSA Mid-Atlantic and Southeast Sunbelt Property Divisions partnered with another federal agency—the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)—this past spring and summer to reutilize excess travel trailers and manufactured housing units for the benefit of federal and state agencies *and* American taxpayers everywhere. The trailers and housing units were originally obtained by FEMA for use in hurricane-relief operations throughout the United States in recent years. GSA stepped in to help FEMA reutilize the trailers and housing units through a series of property “screening” events conducted by GSA throughout the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast Sunbelt regions in which multiple federal and state agencies had the opportunity to inspect and select the property for reuse within their official operations. The reutilization of the property benefited the agencies considerably, as it not only saved them countless dollars for the purchase of new and similarly-constituted units, it also provided American taxpayers with a windfall of savings, too, by conserving tax dollars at a time when conservation efforts are most needed. The travel trailers and housing units will be used in a wide-variety of applications related to the core functions of the recipients. Overall, the partnership of GSA and FEMA resulted in savings estimated at over \$26 million from the transfer of over 1,200 travel trailers and manufactured housing units to eligible federal and state agencies. Through their joint efforts, GSA and FEMA have managed to show how a ray of sunshine sometimes can be found in the darkest of clouds when agencies work together for the common good. Let it shine!

Prioritize Your Disaster Needs!!!

And speaking of disaster assistance, GSA has enhanced its GSAXcess® program for customer agencies to allow them to

identify specific factors that *prioritize* their requests for property. An agency can click “Yes” and then hit “Select Priority” on the GSAXcess® *Check Out* screen when requesting property for situations like “Declared Disasters.” The agency can then process its request through GSAXcess® knowing that its property needs will have priority status. If a specific disaster is not identified, an agency can contact GSA to get it listed. In either case, agencies win, as they will get the property they need when they need it. It’s now a priority!

Property Disposal Condition Codes

(Accurate coding is essential when disposing property.)

Code 1 = Excellent. Property in new or unused condition.

Code 4 = Usable. Property which shows some wear, but can be used without significant repair.

Code 7 = Repairable. Property which is unusable currently, but can be economically repaired.

Code X = Salvage. Property which has some value in excess of its basic material content, but repair is impractical or uneconomical.

Code S = Scrap. Property which has no value except for its basic material content.

APO True Confessions: “I See It in Their Faces”

I am Tommy Tran. As a new intern—Area Property Officer (APO) in GSA’s Mid-Atlantic Region—one thing that I was told was that “we can make a difference” in the community. Of course, “seeing is believing.” Often in GSA, we APOs *see* the “numbers” for property transferred to federal and state agencies as the *only* measure of performance; rarely do we witness real expressions of appreciation. In September 2009, that all changed for me. That month, a fellow APO, Steve Olds, and I visited three state groups operating under the New Jersey State Agency for Surplus Property (NJ-SASP) that obtains federal property through GSA. The first visit was with the Chesil Hurst Police Department (CHPD). During this visit, Officer Kenneth Seymour told us that the CHPD was finding it difficult to obtain key resources. One big problem was gangs. According to Ken, “Gangs are spreading to the suburbs and are equipped with powerful firearms,” and the CHPD was finding it hard to combat gang-war scenarios. Fortunately, the CHPD contacted the NJ-SASP and GSA’s National Firearms Program in Denver and acquired “excellent” surplus firearms at a savings of over \$13,000 to his department. Ken stated that if not for the GSA program, combating gang-wars would have been almost impossible. Our next visit led us to the New Lisbon Developmental Center, a program that provides housing and rehabilitation services to clients with disabilities. We met with Claudette Keegan, Director of Community Relations. She was elated about the federal property the center had obtained through the NJ-SASP and GSA—including cafeteria, office, and dormitory furniture. Apparently, some of the center’s clients do not have families or a place to go and the surplus furniture has enabled her staff to make clients feel at home. “It really

makes a difference,” Claudette stated. “I see it in their faces.” Our last visit was with Laura Callahan, an investigator for the Middlesex Prosecutors Office. Laura was very excited about the GSA program, as her office acquired two mobile homes through the NJ SASP and GSA. Currently, one mobile home is used as an office at the shooting range while the other is used for classroom instructions. Laura stated, “I still can’t thank you all enough for your assistance in helping us accomplish our mission.” That was nice to hear. And, as for me, I am now more aware than ever that GSA can make a difference, as I also can say, “I see it in their faces!”

Civil Rights Emphasized at State Reviews

Civil rights enforcement in programs receiving federal property is getting a strong focus at state reviews under new guidelines issue by the GSA Office of Civil Rights. During the quadrennial operational reviews of State Agencies for Surplus Property (SASP’s), GSA will take a comprehensive look at the accessibility, outreach, and training efforts of SASP’s and the structural and non-structural accommodations made by the recipients of federal property. GSA wants to ensure the widest degree of program support for persons with language, physical, and other types of disabilities.

A Tribute: What A Long Strange Trip It’s Been

After 36 years of outstanding service in state and federal property programs, **George Stanley**, GSA Area Property Officer (APO), Richmond, has his “chips cashed in” and is heading for a new venue—retirement. One of the great standard-bearers of property management, George is leaving behind a legacy of reutilization of government assets that is *non pareil*, as it spans four decades of service and hundreds of millions of dollars in transfers and donations to customers, nationwide. Since his start in April of 1973 with the Virginia State Agency for Surplus Property to his transition to the GSA Mid-Atlantic property program in September of 1984 and up to the present, George has led the charge in screening, allocating, and reutilizing federal excess and surplus property. His work in GSA property spans the history of the Mid-Atlantic Region, including the Richmond Veterans Hospital property disposal project in 1984/85; the "Desert Share" property redistribution project in 1991/92; the Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Veterans Program from 1993 to 2003; the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hurricane Katrina Relief project in 2005/06; and the FEMA commercial trailer reutilization projects in 2007 and 2009. Over the years, scores of groups and organizations have benefited from George’s efforts, including agencies as diverse as the Agency for International Development (AID), NASA, and the U.S. Forest Service in the federal community; the many State Agencies for Surplus Property at the state level; as well as correlating programs like the Users & Screeners Association—a consortium of federal-state property re-users, nationwide. For his efforts,

George has received countless citations from GSA and prestigious accolades from other federal agencies as well, including the Veterans Affairs’ Special Award for “Operation New Hope” in 2003 and the Users & Screeners Association’s “GSA Person of the Year” award in 2005. It is not hyperbole to say that without George the GSA property program would have been different because, in fact, it would have been—but it was not because of the “big” projects that George made his mark. His diligence in transcribing “Turn-In-Document” numbers while standing in the pouring rain, his fortitude in crawling along the highest tiers of an agency warehouse in the dead of winter to check condition codes, and his rectitude in allocating the “right” property to the “right” agency while under collegial pressure gave rise—in spirit and practice—to many of the standards that GSA uses today in managing federal property. Yes! It is true! People can make a difference. George Stanley stands as a shining example of *that* indefatigable spirit that powers the best of federal agencies, like GSA, and makes them bastions of excellence—built upon a thousand little selfless acts of duty and determination that rub off on all of us and make us better employees. George may want to say so long now and (in the words of his beloved Grateful Dead) “hang it up and see what tomorrow brings” after his long journey, but damn, if we’re not all glad he made the trip! Keep on truckin’, George!

NASA Space Shuttle Program Takes Off in GSA

The GSA Office of Personal Property Management is reaching for the stars, as it launched a website to allow authorized recipients—such as eligible federal agencies, state agencies, museums, universities, and schools—to view *and* request NASA Space Shuttle artifacts for display purposes. This is the first time that NASA artifacts have been made so widely available: items include helmets, flight suits, boots, simulators, crew compartments, tires, and others. Interested participants can go to gsaccess.gov (GSAXcess®) or call 1-800-333-7472 (GSAXcess® HelpDesk) for details and links to “user guides” and “background” information. Don’t get lost in space. Find out more at GSAXcess®.

Property Pinpoints Savings by Avoiding Costs

In fiscal year 2009, the Property Program realized a 6% increase from FY ‘08 in the amount of “cost avoidance” achieved through three key recycling efforts--utilization, donation, and the Computers for Learning (CFL) program. The total savings from redistributing excess/surplus personal property to federal agencies, state agencies, and eligible educational entities amounted to over \$800 million in FY ‘09.

⚡ GSA Property Goes Electric ⚡

Sure! We’re a bit behind Bob Dylan who “shocked” the musical world when he went electric (playing guitar) at the Monterey Pop festival in ’64, but we’re doing it for the same reason—for impact! That’s right! GSAXcess® has adopted a new functionality that allows customers to electronically

approve transfer orders for property, rather than having officials handling, signing, and faxing hard copies from, well, Maine to California. The new function was implemented on August 17, 2009, and has been getting rave reviews, as it streamlines cycle time, reduces errors, decreases paper use, and eliminates waste. It sounds like a hit! Now, if we can find a way to have Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone" piped into GSAXcess®, we can whistle why we work, too! Shocking!

Editor's note: I have always thought that a "customer service" issue would be a great idea. But, it was not until I saw the earnest efforts of a young colleague, APO intern, Tommy Tran (see APO True Confessions, page 3), that I was struck by how expressions of gratitude from customers can inspire us all. The firm handshake, friendly call, twinkle in the eye, or warm smile from a customer speaks louder than any reward or trophy could ever do. That's because such a gesture is the eloquent affirmation that what we do in public service counts. It is the indelible "truth" that we can make a difference to someone, somewhere, somehow. And that is inspiration enough for all of us, my friends, to get up each morning and go and do our jobs with all our hearts—again and again. -Bob

≡ *Disposition Newsletter* ≡ 

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