



# NACOP Newsletter

Volume 4, Issue 1

June, 2006

## SYNOPSIS of the NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL OF OFFICE PROFESSIONALS (NACOP) CONFERENCE, MAY 8-12, 2006, St. Louis, Missouri

The theme of the Conference was **“Partnership for Success”** which included sharing information on how to support the ARS mission, learning ARS’ vision for the future, networking with peers, and training sessions (conducted as breakout sessions).

### Tuesday, May 9, 2006

- The attendees were welcomed by Dr. Steven R. Shafer, Director, Midwest Area (host).
- Dr. Edward B. Knippling, Administrator, shared with us the ARS vision and pointed out that office professionals are key to this vision and the mission of ARS.
- Mr. James H. Bradley, Deputy Administrator for Administrative and Financial Management, and sponsor for the meeting, also welcomed us and reiterated the need for office professionals to be recognized as a fundamental part of the Agency. He also stated that a new vendor for E-travel will be forthcoming, ARMPS will be finalized soon, and Emergency Plans should be reviewed and possibly include plans in relation the “bird flu.” He also mentioned that AIMS has been implemented.
- Ms. Barbara King, EEO Specialist, Northern Plains Area, made a presentation on “America: Abundant Diversity” in such a way that we were inspired to really listen to all “groups” of people. People of different ethnic origins and backgrounds have different perspectives that only enrich the situation in a positive and broad way.
- Ms. Suzie Humphreys (inspirational humorist) spoke on “Partnership for Success.” Her basic theme was “I Can Do That.” Through humorous life stories she inspired us to say “I Can Do That” rather than say no because of the motivation of fear of failure or lack of experience or qualifications.

*Special Thanks to Linda Fulton and Lucienne Savell, MSA for their contributions to this Newsletter*



### Wednesday, May 10, 2006

- Mr. Dave Carter, Director, Special Programs, Administrative and Financial Management, presented the following, “7 Habits: Building Trust and Relationships” which was based on the book “7 Habits of Highly Effective People” by Stephen R. Covey. The seven habits covered were: (1) Be Proactive, (2) Begin with the End in Mind, (3) Put First Things First, (4) Think Win/Win, (5) Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood, (6) Synergize, and (7) Sharpen the Saw. There was hand clapping to music and total audience participation with this presentation.
- Dr. Deborah Brennan, Associate Area Director, Mid South Area (currently on detail as Acting Associate Area Director, Midwest Area), gave a presentation on “The Art of Writing Your Performance Documentation” which was prepared by Diane Strub, Deputy Area Director for Business Management, Midwest Area, who was unable to attend the conference. Dr. Brennan also added her special twist to the presentation which was exceptional and well received. We were proud to have the Mid South Area represented in such a way. The following items were pointed out: (1) make sure your standards reflect what you do, (2) standards should be measurable (impact, quality and quantity), (3) keep a tickler file on accomplishments throughout the performance year, (4) write accomplishment documentation in such a way that shows initiative, (5) do not be modest, (6) tie your documentation to Mission, Strategic Plan, etc.
- Ms. Nancy Hightshoe (former St. Louis police detective) presented the following, “Out of Harm’s Way-Make Smart Safety Choices.” She mentioned such things as (1) utilizing a P. O. Box rather than a physical address for mailing purposes, (2) when you have the “uh-oh” feeling, trust your instincts, (3) there is only a window of 20-30 seconds in an attack situation, (4) stay calm and be courageous, (5) visualize a safe outcome, and (6) during a hotel stay when you leave your room, leave the closet door open and partially fill the bathtub with water (this way if an intruder tries to hide in the bathtub, it has water in it, and if the closet door is closed when you return, someone may be hiding in the closet). These were just a few of the ideas presented. This was definitely a heads up and motivated us to be aware of our surroundings.

### Thursday, May 11, 2006

- Dr. Adrianna Hewings, former Director, Midwest Area, started the day with the presentation “Getting Your Message Across.” Dr. Hewings has been a long-time supporter of office professionals and their role as key personnel in the Agency. She imparted good advice on how to handle difficult situations in an office environment. Basically, there should be no talking about someone “behind his/her back.” Deal with the problem directly, but in a respectful way.
- Next on the agenda was Mr. Jeff Schmitt, Program Specialist for the Cooperative Resolution Program for the REE Mission Area, making a presentation entitled “Our Positive Role.” As the title suggests the purpose of the presentation was to “understand our positive influence and impact on the efficiency of our teams.” We should appreciate differences in employees, create a relaxed environment, listen actively, ask open-ended questions, believe in yourself, be forgiving,

support one another, and gain understanding and trust. The following was a very effective part of his presentation:

**C** – Control

**H** – Handle Conflict

**A** – Attitude (80% of success is attitude, 20% aptitude)

**N** – Now is the time to get out of your comfort zone

**G** – Get outside your comfort zone

**E** – Expect the Best

Also, Jeff asked that we remember that, “Leaders inspire/managers manage deadlines.”

- Our Keynote Speaker was Ms. Traci Lynn (outside speaker). Her presentation was entitled “Attitude is Everything” which ties in with the above information (80% of success is attitude, 20% aptitude). Her presentation inspired and motivated a person to have the confidence to excel with a positive attitude and be an inspiration to others.

In addition to the above General Sessions the following Break-out Sessions were offered:

(1) AFM Overview

(2) Web Page Design

(3) Adobe Acrobat

(4) Excel

(5) PowerPoint

(6) PowerPoint

(7) Retirement

(8) Writing and Proofreading Skills

(9) Tips and Tricks (Computer)

Each attendee chose four (4) break-out sessions to attend from a list of 10. Compliments abounded from all of the sessions.

This Conference was a great motivational and networking opportunity available to ARS Office Professionals. Opportunities such as this is available in very few organizations which makes us privileged to be among the elite. This conference was planned and implemented by following:

Debra Duckworth, SAA - Co-Chair

Veronica Cullum, PWA – Co-Chair

Madeline Hall, MSA

Heather Lewandowski, MWA

Patricia Coyle, NAA

Terry Brooks, NAL

Olivia Pedraza, SPA

Stephanie Lively, NAA

Barbie Ballengee, PWA

Rhonda Sampson, OCIO – Technical Advisor

Rosetta Proctor, NPS

Debra Duckworth, SAA – Co Chair

Sherri Buxton – Ex-Officio

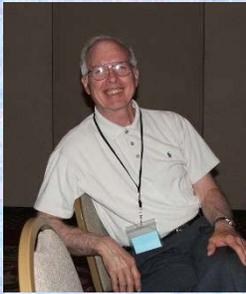
Colleen “Cody” Jensen, NPA

Patricia Berry, AFM

Sheila Messineo, BA

Cathy Lonaberger, OA, Technical Advisor





All Photographs from the meeting can be viewed at [www.arsnet.usda.gov/nacop/conferences/Apr2003/index.htm](http://www.arsnet.usda.gov/nacop/conferences/Apr2003/index.htm)