



The Civil Notes

Special Interest Articles:

- **Women's Equality Day Celebration**
- **Disability Partnership Program Initiative**
- **1st Workforce Planning and Training Symposium**

Individual Highlights:

- Women History 1
- Directors Message 2
- Black Employment Program 3
- Hispanic Corner 4
- Question of the Quarter 6
- Toot the Horn 6
- Disability Employment Awareness 7
- American Indian/Alaskan Native 9
- Kansas City News 10
- Alabama News 11
- What's going on in the Field 12
- Observances 13

FSA Celebrates Women's Equality Day

Women were granted the right to vote by the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which was ratified on August 26, 1920. In 1971, a Joint Resolution of Congress was passed that officially designated August 26th as Women's Equality Day to commemorate that crucial event in American history.

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) participated in celebrating Women's Equality Day in various ways. Several Special Emphasis Program Managers within State Offices around the country organized events and distributed information to FSA employees.

In Washington, DC, FSA took part in a program that was sponsored by the USDA Federal Women's Program Managers National Board. Ms. Jean Parker, Federal Women's Program Manager for USDA, introduced Sandra R. Hansen of Women's History Alive! Ms. Hansen, who has performed all over the country, performed a one-woman play entitled "Kate's Pants." In this play, Ms. Hansen portrays Amelia Bloomer, Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Mrs. Sydney Savory Buckman, by transforming into each character using different layers of costumes.

In the play the women emerge from a magical book to help a young girl understand the struggles with social customs and women's role in history. Audience members thoroughly enjoyed the informative, yet light-hearted performance.



**Sandra R. Hansen
Of
Women's History Alive!**

Women in Agriculture Celebration

Greene County FSA Office Honors Women Farmers on Women's Equality Day

On August 26, 2004, Women's Equality Day was celebrated in Georgia. Women in agriculture from a three-county area, Greene, Hancock and Taliaferro, attended an open house at the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Office in Greensboro, Georgia. Barbara Jackson, County Executive Director, and Marcia Lawrence, Program Technician, hosted the event in honor of the women farmers serviced by the Greene County FSA Office.

Women have long played a significant role in farming, but often in supporting jobs from

picking crops and milking cows to bookkeeping. An aging population, love of the land, quality of life on the farm, and Americans' growing interest in specialty farms, such as herbs, goats, organic vegetables and agritourism are driving more women into owning and managing farms. The latest Agriculture Census by the U.S. Government shows a 12 percent increase in the number of farms run by women in Georgia. More and more women are learning that they can compete on the farm, earning the same pay as their male

counterparts. With new farm equipment, technology, and creative approaches, the number of women farmers is expected to continue its upward trend.



**Some of the attendees of the
"Women in Agriculture"
Celebration"**

Director's Message

Let me first extend my greetings and wishes for a happy and prosperous 2005 to all of you. As the newly appointed Director, I wanted to take this opportunity to briefly discuss some of the initiatives our office is currently involved in and share my vision for the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). This vision centers around three main themes:

- 1) Improving internal processes and customer service through maximum utilization of database management
- 2) Meeting the goals established under the Agency's Strategic Plan and the President's Management Agenda in light of the budget realities we are currently facing
- 3) Providing learning opportunities to employees in order to maximize skill levels within the office

It is my strong belief that as the Office of Civil Rights, we need to continually improve our overall infrastructure in order to provide better customer service and meet reporting requirements. This can best be achieved through optimum use of database tracking systems. These databases will facilitate the tracking and realization of the OCR goals established under FSA's Strategic Plan. Our goal is to improve customer service to both internal and external stakeholders while being responsive to regulatory reporting requirements. While it is important to improve processes through maximum utilization of technology, we cannot achieve success without our employees, our most valuable resource. Therefore, I am committed to ensuring our employees are provided with the necessary learning tools to enhance their skill levels and professional development. I am pleased to be a part of FSA's management team and look forward to working with all of you in furthering the goals of the Office of Civil Rights.

Johnny R. Toles
Director
Office of Civil Rights

Disability Partnership Program Initiative

Maine Farm Service Agency meets Maine Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

The Maine Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Maine Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVR) are working towards participating in the FSA/Vocational Rehabilitation (Voc Rehab) partnership program. The FSA/Voc Rehab partnership program was developed to assist individuals with disabilities meet Federal job qualification requirements. In exchange, the Voc Rehab organizations provide FSA staff interactive disability awareness training. The goal of the partnership program is to share resources and provide work experience to individuals with disabilities.

On October 28, 2004, the two agencies held an open house at the Bangor, Maine, DVR career center. In attendance were representatives from FSA's State and County offices, including the State Committee members. The DVR was equally represented with members from the Division of Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) and the DVR offices located throughout the state. David Lavway, Maine State Executive Director, served as the Master of Ceremony for the event.



FSA and DVR meet to discuss the FSA/VOC Rehab partnership program

The open house began with Mr. Lavway welcoming the participants. Lisa Fyall, Disability Awareness Program Manager, Office of Civil Rights, provided participants with an overview of the Voc Rehab partnership program. The overview included regulatory guidance, partnership information, how the program operates, the benefits of participation for both agencies, and past partnerships.

To assist the participants understand the missions of FSA, DBVI, and DVR, representatives' from the agencies conducted program overviews.

Mr. Lavway provided an overview of a FSA State office mission. Mike Tardy, Androscoggin County Executive Director provided an overview of a FSA County office mission.



Michael Tardy

Penny Plourde, Director DVR provided a program overview of her agency's mission. Bud Lewis, Director DBVI provided a program overview of his agency's mission.

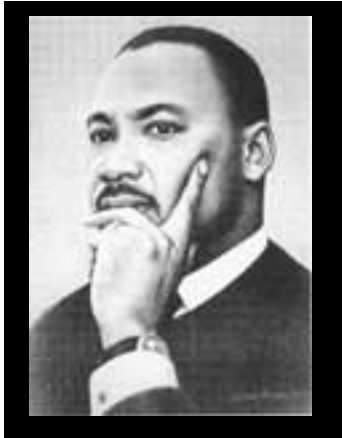


Bud Lewis and Penny Plourde

The open house included information regarding the various employment and internship programs available at FSA. Nicole White, Disability Employment Program Manager, FFAS, discussed the Federal employment of people with disabilities. Her briefing included the Federal job search, internship programs and employment authorities. Bruce McFarlane, Director, USDA Target Center, described the programs and reasonable accommodation services USDA can provide to employees with disabilities.

Participants from both agencies were excited about the partnership program. FSA looks forward to establishing a long and mutually beneficial relationship with the DVR. Both agencies are taking the next step with the development of a partnership agreement for volunteer services and disability awareness training. The goal is to have the partnership in operation by spring 2005.

The Black Employment Program



The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday was January 15, 2005. The Federal holiday commemorating his birthday this year was January 17. The theme for the MLK, Jr. holiday was: "Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On . . . Not A Day Off." This theme comes from The King Center, in Atlanta, GA.

On January 13, 2005 the Department celebrated Dr. King's birthday in the Jefferson Auditorium at 10:00 AM. The keynote speaker was Dr. Ida E. Jones, Senior Manuscript Librarian, Moorland-Spangarn Research Center at Howard University.

February was Black History Month. The theme for 2005's commemoration was "The Niagara Movement." This theme was provided by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Washington, DC. It was based on the movement, or series of meetings held at Niagara Falls in the early 1900s. These meetings led to the creation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

On February 1, 2005 the Department held a Black History Month program in the Jefferson Auditorium at 10:00 AM.

On February 10, 2005, FSA presented their opening Black History event in the Jefferson Auditorium. Dr. E. Fay Williams, attorney and civic leader was the keynote speaker.

Holiday P. Jones, FSA's Black History Program Manager and FSA's Black History committee are currently planning numerous programs for the upcoming year, so please stay tuned!

EEO Counseling and Mediation Branch

FY04 Informal EEO Complaint Activity

The number of informal EEO complaints filed in FY04 decreased by 21.5 percent compared to FY03. The resolution rate of 52.8 percent is a 3.6 percent increase compared to FY03. A trend analysis for FY04 informal complaint activity will be conducted in the 3rd quarter of FY05.

Compliance and Program Analysis Branch

Good News on Title VI Complaint Data

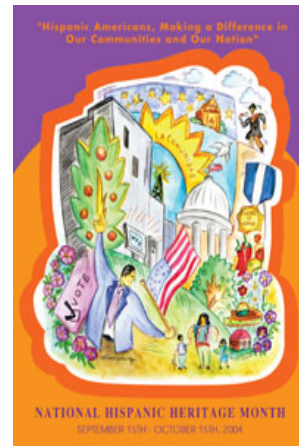
Do you find yourself frustrated when trying to out about the status of a Title VI complaint? Relief is here. FSA/OCR developed a comprehensive Title VI complaint database to better serve FSA offices with Title VI complaint activity. FSA/OCR is also establishing a monthly reconciliation process with USDA/OCR and FSA to ensure the accuracy of records.

The Hispanic Corner

Hispanic Heritage Month

The Federal Government observed Hispanic Heritage Month, September 15 through October 15. The 2004 theme was, "Hispanic Americans: Making a Difference in Our Communities and Our Nations".

Sean Clayton, FSA, Hispanic Employment Program Manager (HEPM), Vice Chair of the National Council of HEPMs was responsible for administering the national nomination and voting process. The winning theme was submitted by Ms. Victoria Reynolds from the Department of Veterans Affairs, New Mexico. FSA-OCR has been very involved in Hispanic issues all year long. Embracing, observing and sharing Hispanic Heritage is a continuous FSA mission.



FSA organizes a mission area wide Hispanic Heritage Month Observance

Thursday, October 14, 2004, FSA organized a mission area wide observance with co-sponsors Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) and Risk Management Agency (RMA). From the agencies, Sean Clayton, FSA, HEPM served as the Master of Ceremonies. W. Kirk Miller, General Service Manager, FAS provided remarks regarding FAS, FSA, and RMA accomplishments in Hispanic employment and outreach.

In a break from tradition, the keynote speaker was not a political appointee or interest group leader, but was a local artist and poet named Christopher John Hoppe. Son of an Army officer, Mr. Hoppe lived with his parents in Western Europe. It was during this period that he began studying the art of sculpting and fresco painting in Italy, Spain, and France. Mr. Hoppe paints in all mediums (i.e. water color, charcoal, oil, and acrylic) as well as engaging in sculpting. He also writes poetry and has won many awards, including the Emily Dickinson Award in 1997.

Despite achieving all of these accomplishments by the age of 27, he remains quite humble. When he took the podium, Mr. Hoppe delivered an insightful, engaging, conversational style message. With the use of PowerPoint slides depicting various artistic works, he focused his discussion on how the works of Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and Pablo Picasso expressed their thoughts and beliefs on political philosophy, human rights, community, and family. Mr. Hoppe went on to talk about how these artists' works and beliefs continue to impact the Hispanic community and the world today.

The ceremony ended with Mr. Hoppe fielding questions from the audience about the lives and works of these artists as well as questions about contemporary Hispanic artists. He also described the influences behind his works, four of which were on display.

Oregon celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month

Throughout the state of Oregon, National Hispanic Month was well celebrated! FSA offices invited other agencies in their Service Centers to participate and enjoy the flavor of Latin America by holding potlucks featuring wonderful Hispanic recipes. Rooms were decorated to match the theme and discussions commemorating Hispanic Heritage Month were held during the potlucks. A good time was had by all!!!



Wasco/Hood River County FSA Staff

The Hispanic Corner continued

1st Workforce Planning and Training Symposium

On October 20, 2004, the National Council of HEPMs held its first workforce planning and training symposium at the Department of Energy's (DOE) headquarters in Washington, DC. Approximately 75 HEPMs and Human Resource Specialists attended the one-day event which featured three concurrent sessions. The moderator for the day was Melissa Rodriguez, HEPM for the Environmental Protection Agency.

The day began with a welcome from DOE's Human Capital Officer, Claudia Cross. Jeffrey Vargas, DOE, HEPM, Council Chairperson, provided the opening remarks. Sean Clayton, FSA, HEPM, gave an overview of the role, goals, and activities of the National Council as well as articulating the purpose of the symposium, which included:

- Strengthening the implementation of the Hispanic Employment Program
- Promoting HEPMs as part of the management team
- Generating networking and discussion opportunities with entities external to Federal Government
- Linking senior leadership to internal resources they have in overcoming barriers to Hispanic employment

Harry Salinas, USDA, HEPM and Noemi Hyman, Diversity Manager for the Defense Intelligence Agency delivered an overview of the roles and responsibilities of HEPMs. In Addition, they discussed how to better implement HEP management.

The morning session closed with Dr. Jerry Ice from the USDA Graduate School announcing a partnership with the National Council. In this partnership, the National Council will be developing a core curriculum for HEP management with the Graduate School. Subsequent to development, the Graduate school will be offering a free pilot of the program for 50 students. In the afternoon, three practical skill sessions were offered to participants.

The first of the concurrent sessions was on building long-term strategic partnerships with organizations outside of the Federal Government. Dan Solis, Chairman of the National Organization of Mexican American Rights (NOMAR); George Cushman, Hispanic College Fund; and Sandra Penaherrera, Internship Director for the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) were the featured speakers.

The second session presented by Michael Dole, Department of Veterans' Affairs was on conducting workforce analyses. In addition, the session discussed presenting the information to management with impact.

The last session was delivered by Vern Best, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. He discussed how the new Management Directive 715 can help HEPM's assist agencies better leverage diversity when managing their human capital. The afternoon ended with a brief address from Ms. Cross on the future of workforce planning and the Hispanic Employment Program.

Mr. Vargas closed the program by offering the 1st ever National Council of HEPMs Unsung Heroes Award. Recipients included:

- Harry Salinas from USDA for 35 years service in support of the HEP
- George Cushman, Hispanic College Fund for his work in support of the 1st Greater Washington DC Hispanic Youth Symposium
- Dan Solis from NOMAR for his tireless efforts in support of Hispanic American civil rights and strong endorsement of the work of the National Council of HEPMs.
- Emma Moreno for over 30 years of Federal service in support of the HEP and another 10 years of work with the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) as their Federal Liaison and coordinator of the LULAC Federal Training Institute.



Toot the Horn!!

This section of the Civil Notes is designed to recognize and acknowledge the accomplishments, achievements and contributions of members of the Civil Rights Team

FSA HEPM Wins Award

From May through August, Sean Clayton, FSA, HEPM worked with the Innovations and Solutions Branch in the Department of Energy's Office of Human Capital. During a time when the Department was certified as "Green" in the strategic management of human capital by OPM and OMB, Sean worked on various programs including the Department's Human Capital Coalition, human capital marketing concepts, and EEO/HR/Diversity Training Symposium. He also was a co-leader in the planning and implementation of the Greater Washington DC Hispanic Youth Symposium with the DOE HEPM. At a recent awards ceremony held at the Department of Energy, Sean received a spot award from the agency's Chief Human Capital Officer for his work on the Hispanic Youth Symposium.

Congratulations, Sean!!!

Promising young star graduates from the Aspiring Leadership Program

FSA OCR would like to congratulate one of its promising young stars. Jeffrey Hayden, EEO Assistant with the Compliance and Program Analysis Branch (CPAB), graduated from the Aspiring Leadership Program on October 1, 2004, at the Baltimore Marriot, Baltimore, Md. This six (6) month comprehensive program, strengthened Jeff's leadership, management, problem-solving, interpersonal and customer service skills, which are reflective in the day-to-day work Jeff has and continues to produce for CPAB. In addition to Jeff's commitment to this program, he was also able to maintain a high level of performance of his duties, and make significant contributions to the overall efficiency of CPAB.

Jeff expressed his appreciation to management for supporting him in this effort. He has also extended a special thanks to Chris Sikes, who served as his mentor, to ensure his successful completion of this meaningful program. FSA OCR is honored to have played such a significant role in Jeff's matriculation. Again, congratulations to Jeff on such a worthwhile accomplishment.

Congratulations to Jeffrey!!!



**“You’re Hired!
Success Knows No
Limitations!”**

Disability Employment Awareness

U.S. Secretary of Labor, Elaine L. Chao, selected *“You’re Hired! Success Knows No Limitations!”* as the official theme for October’s National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The focus of the theme is the empowerment of individuals with disabilities through job creation which will lead to economic growth. Once hired, the road leading to success must be clear of external impediments and road bumps. The Office of Civil Rights sponsored two disability awareness programs with this idea in mind.

Self Defense Workshop for Individuals with Disabilities

To be successful in the workforce, all individuals must feel safe in their work environment. With the increased levels of security in the D.C. area, it is imperative that employees have the skills and knowledge necessary to survive security and emergency situations.

On October 18, 2004 a self defense workshop, sponsored by Farm Service and Risk Management agencies offered employees, specifically those with disabilities, techniques they can use to empower themselves during security, emergency situations and other external impediments. The workshop was conducted in the USDA south building. Johnny Toles, Director, Office of Civil Rights, FSA welcomed participants to the workshop. He also introduced the instructor of the self defense workshop Master Keith Mazza.



Johnny Toles

Master Keith Mazza is the Vice President of Executive Protection for SERAPH, Inc. He has been training in martial arts for over 25 years, specializing in Traditional Wing Chun Kung Fu. Master Keith has developed special programs for both the physically and mentally challenged. He also instituted specially designed programs for the elderly. He is responsible for implementing Grandmaster Cheung’s Stress Management Program and Rape Awareness & Prevention program. He introduced the prevention programs into government institutions and corporate facilities.



Master Keith Mazza and assistant

Master Keith provided instruction and hands on methods participants could employ to protect themselves during emergency situations and physical threats. He walked each participant through various self defense moves. Some of the moves involved the use of ordinary objects found in a workspace. The self defense methods were tailored specifically to an individual’s impairment.



Participants Pamela Steed and Lisa Fyall

Master Keith also taught stress relief techniques that were designed to assist employees release tension and stress created during the ordinary workday.



Disability Employment Awareness Programs continued

Hidden Disabilities Workshop

The President promotes and encourages the employment and advancement of individuals with disabilities in the Federal workforce. Some of these employees have disabilities that are not visually apparent and may require accommodations and/or adaptive equipment. The second disability awareness workshop designed with U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao employment philosophy "You're Hired! Success Knows No Limitations" was geared towards identifying and understanding hidden disabilities.

On November 23, 2004, the Farm Service and Risk Management agencies sponsored a hidden disabilities interactive workshop. The workshop was conducted in the USDA south building. Carmen Martinez, Deputy Director, Office of Civil Rights, FSA welcomed the participants and introduced the facilitator Suzanne Gosden.



Carmen Martinez

The workshop facilitator, Suzanne Gosden is a Human Factors Consultant, national speaker, and educational trainer for the Job Accommodation Network or JAN. JAN is the international information and referral service sponsored by the US Department of Labor's, Office of Disability and Employment Policy. As a consultant for JAN, Suzanne handles both the Americans with Disabilities Act and accommodation cases, specializing in providing accommodation ideas for individuals with cognitive and neurological impairments. She holds teaching licenses in two states and is certified in learning disabilities, mental retardation, and behavioral/emotional disorders. Suzanne teaches for the Industrial and Labor Relations graduate program at West Virginia University.



Suzanne Gosden

Suzanne discussed the various types of hidden disabilities such as psychiatric impairments, learning disabilities, epilepsy, diabetes, AIDS, and cancer. Information regarding the public's reactions about hidden disabilities was discussed. Attendees also learned about famous individuals with hidden disabilities such as George Washington, the first president of the United States.



Participants listen intently

The Interactive teaching method along with the training handouts provided the participants with a clear understanding of hidden disabilities. Additionally, an overview of the types of job accommodations and/or adaptive equipment these individuals may need was covered. The participants enjoyed the training and gained a great deal of insight.



Participating in interactive discussion

American Indian/Alaskan Native Programs

Continuing the Generations thru the Millenniums

On November 17, 2004, the Farm Service Agency presented an American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) program in the USDA, Jefferson Auditorium. The theme was, "Continuing the Generations thru the Millenniums". The Farm Service Agency focused on educating employees, management, and customers on how the AI/AN community is not just about farming anymore.

There were four great presenters. Fredericka Joseph from the Environmental Protection Agency discussed the AI/AN communities food, clothing and housing needs in the Washington DC, and Baltimore Maryland areas.

Gerald Tieyah, Volunteer Coordinator, National Museum of the American Indian spoke about the museum. He invited the program attendees to volunteer at the museum. Gerald explained that by volunteering Individuals will also learn about American Indian culture.

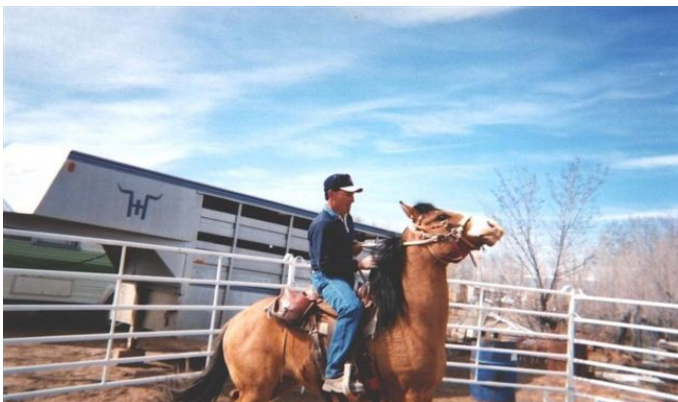
Bernard Garcia, Department of Education, spoke about President Bush's newly signed "A Proclamation" for American Indians. He explained that his office is responsible for implementing the Proclamation across the United States with the help of other Federal Agencies.

Juana Majel-Dixon, Recording Secretary, National Congress of American Indians, discussed how FSA has come a long way. She stated that we have removed some barriers and with programs like this one today, help educate and build relationships. Although the attendance was low, Juana said she felt at home because in Indian culture information is passed mainly person to person. Juana also discussed her work with other Federal agencies to improve government to government relations.

FSA Farm Ownership Loan Program at work in Utah

Victor Pascual Guerrero was raised on a small hay and beef farm in Chile. His dream was to come to the United States. As he listened to the radio one day, he heard the announcer advertise for laborers to work on farms in the United States. Victor jumped at the chance. He arrived in the United States in 1989, and immediately went to work on a sheep ranch in California. A few months later, he moved to a ranch in Ely, Nevada, still working with sheep. In 1991, Victor accepted a job opportunity to work on a cattle ranch in Neola, Utah. He has remained in the area ever since.

Victor loves the United States. In fact, he met his wife in the United States. He is now a permanent resident and has purchased real estate with the help of a FSA farm ownership loan. Victor has also managed to buy a few head of cows each year. He has built his herd to 29. He hopes to increase his herd size and to raise horses. He admits that he still has a few struggles with the English language and learning the culture, but he loves his work and living in American.



Victor Pascual Guerrero at work on his farm



The Kansas City, MO Connection

Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration

The National Hispanic Heritage month was September 15 through October 15. This was the time to recognize Hispanic Americans who have helped to shape our national character and strength. To kick off the celebration, the FSA Kansas City Hispanic Employment Program (HEP) Council and the USDA Club co-hosted a Lunch and Learn on September 15 at the historic Guadalupe Center, which is located in the heart of the Latino community in Kansas City, Mo.



The theme of the luncheon was "Hispanic Americans Making a Difference in our Communities and in Our Nation." The attendees dined on an array of various delicious authentic Mexican dishes. The program began with welcoming and opening remarks from Rose Roos, President USDA Club of Greater Kansas City. The invocation was given by Jaime Martinez, member of FSA HEP Council. The Mistress of Ceremonies was Danette McClellan, Chairperson HEP Council. Remarks were given by Mr. Bernardo Ramirez, Associate Director of Finance and Development, at the Guadalupe Center.



Mr Bernardo Ramirez

Mr. Ramirez shared the history of Guadalupe Center, which began in 1919 when a Catholic women's club established a volunteer school and clinic for Mexican immigrants who had settled in Kansas City, Missouri's Westside. Originally working out of the rectory of Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine, Guadalupe Centers, Inc. (GCI), became one of the first social service agencies for Latinos in the United States.

Teresa Jones, the HEP Manager, gave an overview of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) National Convention which convened in San Antonio, Texas, on July 6-11, 2004.



Left to right: Jaime Martinez, Danette McClellan, Ms. Elida Cardenas, Teresa Jones, and Rose Roos

The Keynote speaker was Ms. Elida Cardenas. Prior to Ms. Cardenas' retirement, she worked for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as an EEO Specialist and HEP Manager. She currently serves as the president of MANA De Kansas City, a National Latina Women's Organization.

Ms. Cardenas shared her early career experiences with the audience. In addition, she discussed the civil rights struggles she encountered as a Hispanic female raised in Sanderson, Texas.

Ms. Cardenas encouraged the audience to be mobile and to move out of familiar surroundings for career advancement. She also spoke on the accomplishments of various Hispanics in the greater Kansas City community and gave a brief talk with regard to her perspective of the LULAC Convention.



Teresa Jones, HEP Manager, (on right) presents Certificates of Appreciation to Ms. Cardenas

Teresa Jones, HEP Manager, presented Certificates of Appreciation to Ms. Cardenas, Rose Roos, Danette McClellan and each member of the HEP Council. The program concluded with remarks, and Rose Roos presenting door prizes.



The Alabama Express

Charles E. Lewis, Program Complaints Specialist, in the Program Complaints Inquiry Branch (PCIB) in Montgomery, Alabama retired on August 31, 2004, after more than 15 years of Federal service. Charles was one of the original specialists hired to work in the PCIB. A luncheon was held in his honor on August 27, 2004. Additionally, on that afternoon, a special gathering of co-workers, friends, and others met to reminisce and wish him well. Charles will be missed by co-workers and friends in Alabama.

Katherine Colvin served as project officer for PCIB in the "Heart of Alabama Combined Federal Campaign." This is the second year in which Katherine has served in this capacity. The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) set new records with over \$900,000 being pledged from approximately 5000 contributors.

Richard Jones was involved in an accident on December 1, 2004. He is expected to make a full recovery after several weeks of recuperation. Please remember Richard and his family in your prayers.

The end of FY 04 was extremely busy for the PCIB team. The team conducted numerous discrimination case investigations, conducted four State CR & EEO Management Reviews, and modified the State Management Review process. In the latter part of October, Sharon E. Ervin, Program Complaints Specialist provided State Management review training to the Program Complaints Inquiry Branch. A "Real Time Tracking System" for Title VI discrimination cases was created by our newest employee, John Smith, III. In August, he visited DC to collaborate on Phase II of the real time tracking system with Headquarters branch, FSA, Office of Civil Rights. The tracking system allows stakeholders to review general details of FSA Title VI discrimination cases for a state or region.

Question of the Quarter

Each quarter a team from the Office of Civil Rights will answer a Civil Rights and/or Equal Opportunity question submitted by FSA employees. If you have a question please send it via email to Lisa Fyall.

What are special emphasis programs and why do we have them?

Special Emphasis Programs (SEP) were established to help ensure the achievement of equal employment opportunity and fair representation of historically underrepresented groups. There are three special emphasis programs that are required in the Federal government by Executive order. Executive Order 11375, 1967 established the Federal Women's Program. Executive Order 11478, 1969 established the Hispanic Employment Program. Executive Order 12106, 1978 established the Disability Awareness Program. Agencies may choose to establish additional SEPs as they deem necessary, such as the Black Employment Program; the Asian American and Pacific Islander Program; and the American Indian and Alaskan Native Program.

These programs are a way to educate and inform the workforce about other cultures and communities in an effort to break down stereotypes and prejudice that can lead to discrimination. One way this is accomplished is through special observances.

The Farm Service Agency has full-time Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPM) located in the Office of Civil Rights, in Washington, DC. These individuals are responsible for the national SEPs and assist in identifying and eliminating barriers to equal employment opportunity. Additionally, FSA has collateral duty SEPMs for each state. They are responsible for managing the Special Emphasis Programs within their state.

What's Going on in the Field?



Puerto Rico

The Mayaguez Service Center commemorated October Breast Cancer Awareness and Disability Awareness Month with a conference. Mrs. Ludin Rosada was the conference chairperson. Mrs. Rosado is a healthcare professional with 27 years of experience on the US Mainland. Now in Puerto Rico, she is a broadcaster on WTPM, a local radio station. Mrs. Rosada also provides support and information regarding the use of natural remedies in the prevention and treatment of illness.



Wisconsin

On 15 September 2004, Wisconsin celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month. Mr. Juan Hernandez, Civil Rights Chair for Wisconsin and Hispanic Employment Program Manager of the Natural Resources Conservation Service took attendees on "A Tour of the Culture of the Caribbean Islands". Following the "tour", Dr. Lydia Zepeda, Director of the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems for the University of Wisconsin, showcased Troy Gardens, a cooperative effort for sustainable agriculture. She introduced attendees to the Mexican delicacy "huitlacoche", a protein-rich mushroom that grows on corn.



Florida

In October 2004, Kevin Kelley, FSA Florida, State Executive Director (SED), created an Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights Advisory Committee (EEO/CR). The committee was established to advise the SED on issues pertaining to EEO/CR. The selected committee members represent a cross section of Florida FSA employees and district locations. Jan Colvin, State Administrative Officer is also the States EEO/CR officer and serves as the committee advisor. Since its creation, the Advisory Committee has received EEO/CR training from the USDA Graduate School. In FY 2004, the Committee developed a charter and by-laws. Additionally, program goals were identified. Using the goals as a catalyst the committee developed an implementation plan to meet the goals. The EEO/CR Committee members are: Bernedia (Birdie) Perkins (Chairperson), Billie Hamrick (Co-Chairperson), Rosa Humphrey, Derly Ann (Sally) Phillips, Laura Tupper, Norman Baker, Joy Llossas, Bonnie Kisko



Utah

On October 6, 2004, Jim Hall Box Elder County CED organized an Onion Gleaning Project. Jim organizes this event each fall with the young men and women in his church youth group in Northern Utah. This year the 30 attendees gleaned 3,656 pounds of onions in less than an hour! The group filled three big boxes that watermelons are normally delivered in. After the onions were loaded for distribution, the group leaders fried onion rings for the hard workers on stoves right in the fields. The youth look forward to this annual activity and they all had a very enjoyable time. Jim delivered the onions to the Cache Community Food Pantry on October 7th. They were most grateful. The food pantry planned on distributing the onions to folks needing a helping hand in about a 2 week period of time.





Commemoration Observances

January: Dr. Martin Luther
King Jr. Birthday

February: Black History
Month

March: Women's History
Month

April: Take our Children to
work

May: Asian American/Pacific
Islander Month

August: Women's Equality
Day

September: Hispanic
Heritage Month

October: Disability
Employment Awareness

November: Native American
Heritage Month
Veteran's Day

About Our Organization...

The Farm Service Agency is committed to ensuring the civil rights of every individual who requests access to the programs, activities and benefits administered by the Agency.

They will be provided employment opportunities without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.

The success of our programs is dependent upon our commitment to uphold this policy. By our words and actions, each of us demonstrates a commitment to equal opportunity for all individuals.

Your commitment to these goals is critical to FSA's mission. Avoidance of discrimination in any form must be our daily, regular, and constant practice.

THE FARM SERVICE AGENCY OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS

**FSA OCR
1280 Maryland Ave
Suite 580 B
Washington, DC 20024**

**Phone: 202-401-7200
Fax: 202-401-7100**

Check us out on the World Wide Web: www.fsa.usda.gov/civi

If you would like to make comment or submit information for publication please contact Lisa Fyall at the Farm Service Agency, Office of Civil Rights.