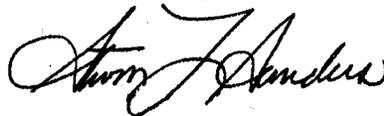


For: FSA Offices

Office of Chief Information Officer (OCIO) Firewall Reconfiguration Project

Approved by: Active Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Overview

A Background

To further protect the assets of USDA, OCIO has been working on a project to limit the amount of unknown traffic coming into, and out of, the USDA network. These changes will benefit FSA by providing a more secure environment for our users and associated equipment. This project converts the OCIO firewalls from an explicit deny posture to an explicit permit posture.

The first implementation date for the OCIO firewall changes is set for **April 25, 2004**. Additional changes will be implemented on the OCIO firewalls in mid-May or later.

Although extensive work has been done to identify our communication requirements for OCIO, there is always the possibility that minor exceptions will be found after OCIO implements their firewall changes on April 25 and later. These exceptions could cause interruptions in user access, database connectivity, WebFarm applications, and various other external interfaces.

B Purpose

This notice provides guidance about new OCIO security measures to all FSA offices.

C Contact

If additional information is needed, FSA Service Center employees shall contact their respective Help Desks.

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Disposal Date | Distribution |
| October 1, 2005 | All FSA Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices |

Notice IRM-351

2 Action

A User Action

No action is required for users during this change process. This notice ensures that users are aware of the:

- project implementation date
- possibility of associated connectivity issues.

Users in all locations should follow normal State IT and centralized Help Desk escalation procedures to report problems. Normal routing of trouble calls will be instrumental to the success of timely resolutions during this period of change.

B Help Desk Assistance

National Help Desks have been briefed on this project and ways to identify if true connectivity issues have resulted because of the reconfiguration of the OCIO firewalls. Individuals of the Tier 2 and Tier 3 telecommunications support groups:

- have also been apprised of the situation
- will be ready to provide additional support as required.

FSA network firewall administrators will be focusing their efforts on quick resolution of any problems associated with this managed change.

The best method for resolution of problems that may result from these firewall reconfigurations is to:

- try to resolve normal problems locally
- ensure that standard problem identification techniques have been used
- allow the various State and national support staffs to concentrate on problems associated with external network connectivity.

Direct any questions about this notice to your appropriate centralized Help Desk.