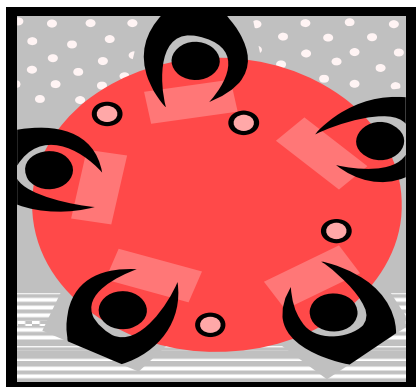


Inspection and Evaluation Committee

President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency

February 2007



INSPECTION AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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IG Peace Corps
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IG State
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IG HHS
GEORGE OPFER
IG VA
JON RYMER
IG FDIC



UPCOMING MEETINGS

Commerce OIG will host a joint I&E Committee and Roundtable meeting on March 8th. Details will be sent via email or for more information, please contact Erin Reuther at ereuther@oig.doc.gov.

NEW I&E COMMITTEE MEMBERS BRING VALUABLE EXPERIENCE TO THE OIG COMMUNITY

H. David Kotz was appointed IG for the Peace Corps in February 2006. IG Kotz assumed the role after three years as Associate General Counsel for Litigation for the Peace Corps. While in that role, he was responsible for overseeing all Agency litigation, including administrative and federal court proceedings, labor arbitrations, and employee grievances.

Prior to joining the Peace Corps, IG Kotz worked for the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of General Counsel. His federal experience was preceded by nearly 10 years practicing international law. IG Kotz is a graduate of the University of Maryland and Cornell Law School.



Jon T. Rymer was confirmed as Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's (FDIC) IG in June 2006. IG Rymer comes to FDIC with extensive private sector banking ex-

perience. From 1981 to 1997, he worked as Executive Vice President of two banks, where he held leadership roles in mergers and divestitures, systems conversions, and business and strategic planning.



He also brings experience with a major accounting firm where he worked with banking clients. In addition, he has served for 25 years in the active and reserve components of the U.S. Army. IG Rymer is a graduate of the University of Tennessee and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

FEDERAL WORKERS' COMPENSATION OVERSIGHT IS EXPANDING THROUGHOUT THE OIG COMMUNITY

The OIG community continues to monitor the workers' compensation program in federal agencies. Since the March 2006 Federal Workers' Compensation Symposium, several OIGs have made considerable progress in identifying workers' compensation-related fraud, waste, and abuse in their agencies.

Between May and September 2006, several OIGs began reviews of their agencies' workers' compensation programs. These include the Departments of Homeland Security, Energy, Defense, and Treasury. Other OIGs have recently completed or are nearing completion of such reviews, including:

The **General Services Administration** (GSA) OIG is in the final stages of its review of GSA policies and procedures for federal workers' compensation. With the Department of Labor OIG's assistance, GSA OIG utilized the OIG's Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) protocol as a guide for its review of case files, chargeback bills, and other documentation.

The **Peace Corps** OIG recently investigated claims valued at approximately \$11 million annually. In the upcoming fall/winter issue of the *Journal of Public Inquiry*, the Peace Corps OIG reports that the agency has approximately 1300 open claims for Peace Corps volunteers and staff.

As a result of its review, approximately 500 FECA claimants voluntarily dropped off the rolls, sav-

ing approximately \$500,000. In two other cases, Peace Corps OIG investigations resulted in approximately \$40,000 in annual savings from reduced claims, or \$1.4 million over the lifetime of the claims.

The Peace Corps OIG also found at least one instance where the Department of Labor's Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) continued to pay a claimant several years after the claimant notified the department that he/she was no longer disabled.

Peace Corps OIG reported that close scrutiny of initial claims is very important, especially of claims for conditions that lack visible physical impediments, such as mental/emotional/stress-related conditions.

The **Government Printing Office** (GPO) OIG also recently performed FECA work at its agency. The OIG estimated cost savings could be \$6.17 million over the next 10 years and found a deceased claimant was still receiving benefits. GPO OIG plans to conduct a more extensive review of FECA.

The **U.S. Agency for International Aid** (USAID) OIG recently completed a review of management of its agency's FECA program. In December 2006, USAID OIG issued its final report with recommendations that address concerns regarding the implementation of a master inventory to document workers' compensation files, utilization of a file checklist to ensure that benefit payments are properly

authorized, and development of a process to monitor continuation of pay information.

The **Commerce** OIG continues to follow up on recommendations from its March 2006 report on the departmental workers' compensation program. The Department has increased its oversight of the FECA program and reports that it has returned at least 7 employees to work with more in the pipeline, terminated or suspended compensation for some employees, retrieved an overpayment of \$272,000 to the spouse of a deceased employee, and identified other dead employees on the FECA rolls.

In addition, Commerce improved the information flow to and training for its managers, established bureau access to case files, and is developing alternative employment methods for return-to-work candidates.

GET THE SCOOP!

For more information about any item in this newsletter, contact Erin Reuther at 202-482-4069 (ereuther@oig.doc.gov) or Jill Gross at 202-482-2754 (jgross@oig.doc.gov).

NOW AVAILABLE!

The *IG's Guide to Evaluating Agency Emergency Preparedness* is available online at ignet.gov or a CD-Rom can be sent to your agency. Please contact Erin Reuther at ereuther@oig.doc.gov for more information.

