



OCIO — Information Technology Services

ITS Connections

Issue 14 June 23, 2007



DEPARTURES BRING CHANGES TO OCIO, ITS, TSO & NITC

JUNE has been a big month for ITS and OCIO. Rich Roberts retired on the 2nd, after 42 years of government service; on the 8th, USDA CIO Dave Combs announced he would leave USDA at the end of the month; and Janice Lilja, former ACIO-TSO, has moved to the Smithsonian Institution.



Photo: Dave Combs, USDA CIO.



Photo: Jerry Williams, CIO (Acting).

JERRY WILLIAMS, Deputy Chief Information Officer-OCIO (DCIO), will serve as Acting CIO. Jerry, an advocate of federal entrepreneurship and customer service, has been DCIO since June 2005. He has over twenty years with the Federal Government, including

Bob Suda, will serve as Acting Deputy CIO, USDA. He is currently ACIO for Integration and Operations. Bob brings more than 30 years of government services to the position, including many years of IT operations, IT procurement and finance experience. Prior



Photo: Bob Suda thanks Rich Roberts for his many years of service.

Jerry was recently elected to the Board of the American Council for Technology (ACT), a non-profit organization that advises government in understanding, acquiring, and using IT resources effectively and efficiently.*

to joining USDA in 2006, he served as Assistant Commissioner for the Office of IT Solutions within the General Services Administration's Federal Technology Service (FTS).*



Photo: Kathleen Rundle, ACIO for ITS/NITC/TSO (Acting).

KATHLEEN RUNDLE will serve as Acting Associate CIO for Integration and Operations. She will focus on integrating the three operational units within OCIO: NITC, TSO, and ITS. Currently, she is the ACIO of NITC, which now operates four Centers of Excellence. Kathleen, with 30 years at USDA, is a visionary concerning the evolving role of IT in government and she has advanced the efforts of government IT executives in delivery of high quality, cost effective government enterprise IT services. *

The Deputy ACIOs will be Eric Won, ITS; Ed Reyelts, NITC; and John Donovan, TSO.

* For more biographical about OCIO Leadership, go to: <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/leadership.html>.

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Spring Calendar

Summer begins	June 20
Independence Day	July 4

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REALIGNMENT - AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEVERAGE STRENGTHS ACROSS OCIO

When Bob Suda joined OCIO last year as ACIO-Integration and Operations, his mandate included finding ways to help the operational enterprises of OCIO – ITS, NITC, & TSO – serve USDA as efficiently and effective for customers as possible. As Bob said during the San Antonio ITS Management Conference in May, “We must increase the value of ITS by delivering services that meet or exceed customer expectations!”

Excellence: reducing impediments such as silos and leveraging ITS strengths and organizational breadth to work better together.

INTEGRATION ACROSS THE ENTIRE OCIO OPERATIONS SYSTEM

The scope of change now spans beyond ITS and includes NITC and TSO. These three enterprises within OCIO share customers and technology. Now we also share leadership, a vision, and the opportunity to leverage our skills and resources to provide our customers a unified field of services and support.

CHANGE was another theme in San Antonio. Both Rich Roberts and Dave Combs talked about changes needed to become a Center of

GETTING TO KNOW



A NEW SERIES OF PROFILES OF OUR CUSTOMER AGENCIES & THEIR CIOs

INTRODUCING STEVE SANDERS, DIRECTOR, FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA), INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES DIVISION (ITSD)

Steve Sanders comes from a farming family in Ohio. After earning a BS in Agricultural Engineering, he joined the Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation Service in 1984 as a program specialist. Steve is also a member of the Senior Executive Service, and a graduate of the Federal Executive Leadership Institute.



Photo: Steve Sanders.

Steve rose through the IT ranks in Kansas City and, in 2004, moved to Washington, D.C., as Associate Director of FSA-IT Services Division. Within months he became acting Director and was present at the creation of ITS. He served as a member of ITWG, the interagency IT Working Group, and he was an architect of ITS.

He became Director of ITSD in 2005, with national responsibility for business application software systems used by FSA and the Commodity Credit Corporation. These business systems are used to control a direct loan portfolio of \$6.9 billion, a guaranteed loan portfolio of \$9.0 billion and a direct program benefits portfolio of \$20-25 billion.

“FSA IS AN OUTCOME OF MODERNIZING,”

Steve explains, “as are the Common Computing Environment and ITS. In 1994, the merger of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service with the Farmers’ Home Administration resulted in the creation of FSA. Then, FSA became a partner with NRCS and RD in the USDA Service Center modernization process and, since the 1990s, the Service Center Agencies have been providing one-stop services to USDA customers.” Modernization has also been a process of developing, using, and improving information technology to help deliver those services.

FSA is part of USDA’s Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services (FFAS). The Agency’s overall program areas include Farm Loans, Farm Support, Disaster Relief, and Conservation. It also provides important technology resources and services like Geographic Information System operations. There are more than 2,300 local offices staffed by over 13,000 county office employees, plus another 5,800 Federal employees across the country.

With its presence in 50 states (and off-shore territories), a loan portfolio of over \$40 billion, and annual payments to farmers of up to \$30 billion, FSA could be considered one of the top 500 world enterprises. The Service Centers represent one of the largest interconnected infrastructure and computing architectures documented.

FROM COBOL TO MIDAS

The heritage of FSA’s programs goes back to the paper and file card age of the 1930’s. Parts of the system became computerized in the 1970s and ‘80s as databases were created to track millions of loans and transactions. About two hundred FSA programs were supported by business applications written on COBOL and other legacy systems that were updated to AS400 systems.

At this time USDA did not have network connectivity. Since these business applications were operated and managed locally, FSA offices also had their own local servers. Periodically, local data would be archived to tape and shipped to central databanks.

With the 2002 Farm Bill and the Internet age, the Agencies were expected to provide convenient on-line services. At FSA, this began with MIDAS, the *Modernize and Innovate the Delivery of Agricultural Systems* project, which adapted those AS400 programs for use on the Web.

Migration of legacy applications was stalled by funding and resource limitation issues. Consequently, while the business applications operate on the Web, they aren’t native to current technology and have put a strain on the system.

FSA PROGRAM STABILIZATION PROJECT UNDERWAY

Last February, during one of many Farm Bill hearings, Senator Bennett, R-Utah, asked USDA Secretary Johanns why the FSA internet connections were crashing. The Secretary set in motion a process to finally fix a very complex problem – migrating all FSA business applications onto a modern platform and upgrading the network infrastructure to better handle FSA programs.

Steve Sanders says, “This has fast-tracked a problem solving process we’ve all been anxious to begin for a long time. When we started modernizing to bring FSA, NRCS, and RD into a unified workspace, a common computing environment was required. ITS was the next stage, bringing us great improvements in cross-agency support.”

The CCE also revealed the extent of the legacy challenge. As Steve puts it, “With a commitment from Congress, ITS and FSA are collaborating on a \$500 million plan that synchronizes our efforts: FSA’s at updating our business applications and ITS’ at optimizing and stabilizing the architecture.”

IN THE SECURITY SPOTLIGHT -- LOST & STOLEN EQUIPMENT

(FROM THE OPERATIONS SECURITY BRANCH: *FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS*)

Janell Duke, Chief of the Operations Security Branch – Infrastructure Operations Division, compiled a comprehensive set of frequently asked security questions & answers for the ITS Management Conference in San Antonio last May.



Photo: Janell Duke, giving her presentation of securityFAQs at the ITS Management Conference in San Antonio.

The key five security topics were:

- Forensic/Investigations (covering procedures when ITS detects usage violations.
- Lost or stolen equipment.
- Access control.
- Vulnerability scanning.
- POA&M (Plan of Action & Milestones).

Presentations from our leadership showed heightened concern about the security of computers and information. This feature focuses on that group of FAQs.

If you want to see the whole set, it can be downloaded at:
http://www.ocio.net.usda.gov/ocio/its_ep/its_san_antonio.html

Q: What type of equipment should be reported to the OCIO-CS hotline?

A:

- Laptop
- Desktop
- PDA
- Cell Phone
- Removable Storage Media

Q: Who do I call when equipment is lost or stolen?

A: When you have discovered that equipment has been lost or stolen, you must **IMMEDIATELY** call the toll free **LOST AND STOLEN EQUIPMENT HOTLINE** at **888 926-2373**.

Then, contact TSD. TSD will follow Standard Operating Procedures for internal Magic reporting and tracking.

Q: Who's responsibility is it to call?

A: The end-user of the equipment should **IMMEDIATELY** call. If an end-user contacts ITS, we should confirm that the caller has reported the loss to OCIO-CS via the hotline. If not, please help facilitate that reporting.

Q: What if the agency calls me reporting stolen equipment?

A: Verify that the user has called the **LOST AND STOLEN EQUIPMENT HOTLINE**. If they have not done so, please instruct them and/or their supervisor to call **IMMEDIATELY**.

Follow the TSD Standard Operating Procedures. Also, confirm that the caller has followed his or her agency's procedures.

Q: What information is needed to report lost or stolen equipment?

A: You will need to answer general who, what, where and when types of questions. You must report what type of information was stored on the equipment; you must specify whether privacy and/or sensitive information was stored on the equipment.

Q: How do I direct questions about lost or stolen equipment reporting from Agency users?

A: Ensure they have utilized the **LOST AND STOLEN EQUIPMENT HOTLINE**, if applicable, for reporting. You can direct users to their Agency ISSPM to answer additional questions about how to report/who should report lost or stolen equipment.

Once more from the top



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Office of the Chief
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20250

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL USDA EMPLOYEES AND CONTRACTORS

FROM: David M. Combs, USA Chief Information Officer MAY 8 2007

SUBJECT: Hotline for Reporting Lost/Stolen Government Provided Information Technology Equipment or Media

Effective Monday, May, 7, 2007, a toll-free hotline number for reporting lost or stolen government-issued information technology equipment such as laptop computers, personal data assistants, cellphones and removable storage media is available to all employees, contractors, and business partners.

When calling, be prepared to answer questions regarding the loss or theft, including:

- who, what, when, and where.
- what type of information was stored on the equipment, and
- specifically, if sensitive information was stored.

Remember that timely reporting is a responsibility that we all share.

Toll Free lost and stolen equipment hotline: 1-888-926-2373

WASHINGTON COMMUNICATIONS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES (WCTS)

WCTS plans, designs, implements, manages and maintains USDA's Washington, DC area Metropolitan Area Network (HQ-MAN), including its many services, technologies, customer support activities, and business operations.

Valarie Burks is the WCTS Director. With her core government staff, she oversees the activities of 3 teams that provide USDA's leadership and OCIO at Washington, DC Headquarters with secure, comprehensive IT services.



Photo: WCTS Government Staff, left to right, Timothy Arnold, Victor Winnard, Valarie Burks (Division Director), Maureen Farrell, and Yvonne Winston.

WASHINGTON NETWORK SERVICES BRANCH (WNSB) / NETWORK OPERATIONS CENTER (NOC)

This branch develops and implements optimal programs, procedures and solutions for the use of voice communications services and systems for USDA within the Washington, DC Metropolitan area. Among its many activities, it:

- Acquires, installs and manages telecommunications equipment and services.
- Provides technical advice and assistance throughout the Washington, DC Metropolitan area on telecommunications operational issues.
- Provides a central operations office that coordinates voice facility/equipment moves, changes, installations, and disconnects; and performs trouble analysis and resolution for the USDA Washington, DC Metropolitan area.



Photo: WCTS Network Services Branch Contract Staff, left to right, Tim Harvey, Tex Bias, Arnicia Johnson, Marc McCall, Crystal Hollingsworth, and Mike Fox.

- Operates and maintains an electronic employee locator service for the USDA Washington DC Metropolitan area.
- Provides advice and technical assistance in the planning, design, engineering, implementation and operation of telecommunications facilities and networks.
- Administers contracts, as needed, relating to provision of telecommunications network services.
- Coordinates with GSA, the Departmental Voice Mail System service implementation and operation.



Photo: WCTS Telecommunications Customer Service Center (TCSC) Contract Staff, left to right, John Wilson, Joe Logan, Sandra Smallwood-Voss, Steve Powers, Debora Simms, Richard Mazzuca, Patricia Jones, Holly Stack (Government Lead), and Bryan Dixon (Government Manager).

TELECOMMUNICATIONS CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER (TCSC)

The Telecommunications Customer Service Center has the responsibility for establishing and maintaining voice telecommunications services for headquarters offices of USDA Agencies located in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. To accomplish this mission, TCSC serves as the single point of contact for all local requests for telecommunications services and/or the purchase, installation, de-installation, rearrangement of telecommunications equipment.

COMPUTER SUPPORT BRANCH (CSB)

The CSB provides customers with technical assistance and solutions concerning desktop computing, e-mail, and local area networking. The CSB goal is to facilitate USDA's mission by providing cost-effective, high quality services. Their mission is to enable customers to improve and refine business processes through the innovative and strategic application of information technology.



Photo: WCTS Computer Support Branch (CSB) Contract Staff, left to right, Cary Myers, Mike Hubenschmidt, Carl Holmes, Bindu Reddy, Eric Marshall, Eric Harris (Government Manager), Jimmy Handal, Amit Ubale, and Asim Srivastava.

REST EASY, WEARY TRAVELER

From Cheryl Cannon, Employee Services Branch - AMD



Help from the ITS TRAVEL Help Desk

➔ IS FEDTRAVELER GIVING YOU FITS?

➔ DID YOU RETURN FROM A TDY ASSIGNMENT AND HAVE A PROBLEM COMPLETING YOUR TRAVEL VOUCHER?

While your division's travel processors are your first line of defense, other help is available. But, who are they? ...And what do they do?

The section is officially called the Information Technology Services Section (ITSS), but often is referred to as our "Travel Help Desk." This section is located at the National Finance Center in New Orleans, but it is a part of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer's Controller Operations Division (COD). It provides various services dealing with travel, credit card, and related issues. They can be reached at: 1-800-421-0323 or 504-426-5050.

SERVING ITS TRAVELERS

Although the Travel Help Desk performs a variety of tasks, its main purpose is to serve ITS travelers and service ITS travel claims. Help Desk staff:

- Answer travel-related questions
- Process travel voucher payments
- Serve as Travel Coordinator (FedTraveler and Move Management Administrator)
- Serve as liaison with Bank of America for travel card maintenance
- Serve as contact for travel policy inquiries
- Answer travel-related data calls
- Send delinquency notices to travelers.

FEEL FREE TO CALL.

I spoke to Rick Culotta, head of COD's Analysis Section, who stated that "we enjoy our relationship with ITS and it is a pleasure to work with you." If you have travel-related issues that you are having trouble resolving, feel free to give the Travel Help Desk the business.

THE NEW TSP TICKER - May 2007 (AS OF JUNE 1) A WAY TO KEEP TRACK OF YOUR TSP INVESTMENT

FUND	G	F	C	S	I
May 31, 2007 close	\$11.94	\$11.29	\$17.07	\$20.88	\$24.61
May Change:	0.34%	↓(0.70%)	3.52%	4.40%	2.54%
Year to date	1.96%	1.35%	8.80%	11.30%	10.76%

FUND	L 2040	L 2030	L 2020	L 2010	L Income
May 31, 2007 close	\$18.44	\$17.51	\$16.64	\$15.26	\$13.20
May Change:	2.79%	2.52%	2.15%	1.53%	0.92%
Year to date	8.53%	7.75%	6.80%	5.02%	3.45%

Note: You can view TSP numbers at <http://www.tsp.gov/rates/monthly-current.html>.

Why CARE About LONG TERM CARE INSURANCE?

From Nancy Palmer,
Employee Services Branch - AMD

Of all the great benefits we can receive as Government employees, one often causes apprehension when mentioned: the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program (FLTCIP). I recently read that only 26% of Government employees have taken advantage of the FLTCIP. Four misconceptions may account for the low number, including that FLTCIP is:

- Not very pleasant to think about.
- Believed to be expensive.
- No longer available since open season is over.
- Difficult to understand.

Hopefully, we can eliminate at least a couple of those factors and you can decide if long term care insurance is right for you.

LONG TERM CARE AND WHAT IT COSTS -

Long term care is what you will need if you reach a point when you can't perform normal activities of daily living by yourself, due to chronic illness, injury, disability, or the aging process. Long term care insurance is a way to help pay for the expenses related to the care you might need at home or at a nursing facility.

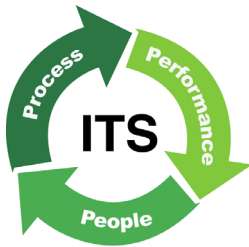
The current national average annual cost of home health care is well over \$20,000 and is expected to climb to \$68,000 by 2030. The national average for nursing home care is currently \$52,000 annually for a semi-private room and is expected to climb to \$190,600 by 2030. If you do not have long term care insurance, and do not have personal funds to pay these prices, you will be expected to deplete your assets before you can qualify for Medicaid for nursing care, which is a joint Federal/State program for the impoverished. Most of us would rather see our assets go to our family instead of being depleted for our nursing care. So, long term care insurance may be a decision you make for the benefit of your loved ones as much as it is for you.

Continued on next page.

<http://www.ocio.usda.gov/its/index.html>

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DELIVERED: **May** Deployment Highlights from the IO Lab.

Below are a few of the major ITS/SCA project deployments out of a total of 34 projects deployed in May 2007 (these include numerous security patches and software upgrades).

Project Name	Agency/Initiator & ITS Release Manager	Deployment Description
GET Tool v1.0.12 – The GET Tool is used for maintaining all system variables of the GIS Tools deployed to the field. This version of the GET Tool adds support for existing GIS and new GIS software.	FSA - Sherman Pitman Release Manager - David Hyde	A two-phase SMS deployment method was used: first, nationwide to all FSA (non-Land Use) sites; then to all FSA Land Use sites.
ArcGIS CLU Maintenance v4.1.13 – This application allows users in County Offices to add or update spatial data, tabular data, and auditing data.	FSA - Ted Payne Release Manager - David Hyde	A two-phase SMS deployment method was used: first, nationwide to all FSA (non-Land Use) sites; then to all FSA Land Use sites.
MS Office 2003 SP2 using SMS – Microsoft® Office 2003 Service Pack 2 contains significant security enhancements, in addition to stability and performance improvements. Some of the fixes included with SP2 have been previously released as separate updates. This service pack combines them into one update.	Enterprisewide - OCIO/ITS - Don Michelli Release Manager - David Pfaffenberger	This upgrade to MS Office was deployed to all XP workstations automatically. Currently, over 37,000 workstations have been upgraded automatically.
Live Meeting 2005 V7.6 – Microsoft® Live Meeting is a real-time interactive web conferencing solution that lets connects multiple people in multiple locations with just an Internet connection and a web browser. Live Meeting can accommodate up to 2,500 participants, making it a versatile web conferencing tool for business communications.	Enterprisewide - OCIO/ITS - Jack Zechman Release Manager - David Pfaffenberger	This upgrade to Live Meeting is the first SMS deployment that allows the user to install the software. The user installs the application through "Run Advertised Programs" in the Control Panel. Over 10,000 users installed Live Meeting in the first 2 days. To date, over 14,000 users have installed Live Meeting on their workstations.

LONG TERM CARE INSURANCE & WHAT IT COSTS Continued from p. 5

might be surprised. To give you an idea of premium cost, a 50-year old who chooses the least amount of coverage will pay approximately \$6.54 per pay period for the Future Purchase Option that allows you to periodically purchase additional coverage with increases in premiums over time. If the same person chose the Automatic Compound Inflation Option where premiums remain constant but benefits increase with inflation, the cost is \$19.56 per pay period for the least amount of coverage.

The cost is based on several different factors and choices about the amount of coverage you want and the premium is adjusted accordingly. Keep in mind that the premium is based on your age and the cost will continue to go up if you postpone your decision and opt for insurance at a later date.

If you think FLTCIP is too expensive, you

If you would like to read more about the coverage choices and determine your cost, a calculator is provided for you at: https://www.ltcfeds.com/ltcWeb/do/assessing_your_needs/ratecalc

Apply for FLTCIP ANYTIME - Some employees might be under the impression that since they missed the open season for FLTCIP, they can no longer participate in the program. **THIS IS NOT THE CASE!**

If you are a Federal employee eligible to enroll in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB), then you are eligible to apply for the FLTCIP. Generally, this is any full-time permanent employee, you do not actually have to be enrolled in the FEHB, just eligible for enrollment. Additionally, your spouse, adult children, parents, parents-in-law, and stepparents may be eligible for FLTCIP. Applicants will be required to undergo a review of their health status to determine eligibility for coverage under the plan.

PLANNING AHEAD - Many of us are looking forward to retirement some-

time in the next decade and it's exciting to think about all of the plans we will make for those days ahead. However, it is also necessary to think about all possibilities and we might need long term care at some point, hopefully, many years from now. Be sure to check out the information at the sites provided and make an informed choice about whether you need long term care insurance.

You can read more about FLTCIP at the following web sites:

- Office of Personnel Management: <http://www.opm.gov/insure/ltc/index.asp>
- *Long Term Care Insurance* at the Bureau of the Public Debt: <http://arc.publicdebt.treas.gov/fs/fsagociohnotref.htm>
- The Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program: <http://www.ltcfeds.com/>.

The BPD and FLTCIP sites have links to contacts for you to get answers to any questions you might have.