

Mid-Atlantic FOCUS



A Newsletter for Customers of the GSA Public Buildings Service

Winter 2008

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Focus on the Web at: www.gsa.gov/midatlanticfocus

Going Green Saves Green

The Mid-Atlantic Region celebrated the installation of solar electric panels at the Clarkson S. Fisher U.S. Courthouse Annex in Trenton, New Jersey on November 8, 2007. The solar panel installation is the first solar electric array installation within the Region. GSA expects to save over \$17,000 annually by reducing energy costs and anticipates cutting carbon dioxide emissions by 292 tons over the panels' lifetime.

Courthouse employees, community leaders, and special guests gathered to commemorate the solar panels' unveiling. GSA Regional Administrator Barbara L. Shelton noted the importance the Mid-Atlantic Region has placed on environmental concerns. "GSA has made great strides over the years reducing energy consumption in buildings," Shelton said. "Realization of these goals stems from GSA's efforts to perform in the most business-like manner possible. The bottom line is that reducing energy consumption in buildings is just good business."

The 196 solar panels, which were placed on the Courthouse Annex's seventh floor roof, have an optimal capacity of 40 kilowatts. GSA estimates the solar panel project will reduce the building's carbon dioxide emissions and achieve energy savings of nearly 50,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per year.

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Solar panels installed at the Clarkson S. Fisher U.S. Courthouse Annex in Trenton, NJ are expected to reduce the facility's annual energy costs by \$17,000.



From the Desk of the




ARA

For the first time, *Real Estate Forum* has ranked the top 100 companies in the brokerage, ownership, finance and development arenas. The results were released in November 2007 and we're excited to share news that the GSA Public Buildings Service ranks number one in the category of real estate owner/investor.

Our establishment of a national accounts program, along with the advances we've made in our business processes, have enabled us to better assist federal agencies in aligning space needs with their long-term goals. And, we're doing it efficiently. On average, our negotiated rates for leased space in the Mid-Atlantic Region are 13% below comparable market rates.

Increased efficiencies are resulting in savings—savings we are pleased to be passing along to our federal clients. In this edition of *Focus*, you'll read about a reduction in the PBS fee charged for leasing transactions in 2008. We've also reset the tenant improvement allowance and recalibrated local construction cost multipliers, translating into increased construction allowance for many of our federal clients.

Your valuable feedback helped us identify opportunities for improvement in GSA's process and management of reimbursable services. In this edition, you'll read about a number of changes GSA has implemented in FY2008. We've expanded "F" type Reimbursable Work Authorization (RWA) thresholds, improved the RWA customer billing statement, and revised the RWA form so that it is more user friendly.

We remain committed to continuously improving our services to you and look forward to your feedback on our most recent initiatives. 

Rob Hewell
Assistant Regional Administrator
Public Buildings Service
Mid-Atlantic Region

Smaller Fees and Larger Allowance for New Fiscal Year

The General Services Administration's (GSA's) Public Buildings Service (PBS) takes great pride in being your workplace provider. In recent years, we have been working to restructure and introduce new efficiencies to our leasing program. We are pleased that we can now financially demonstrate the translation of these improvements by lowering the fee we charge to acquire and administer your leased space.


With the start of this fiscal year, PBS has implemented an overall fee change depending on the type of leasing transaction we provide. For the majority of our lease transactions, the fee will be reduced from eight to seven percent for cancelable transactions, and from six to five percent on non-cancelable transactions. This fee reduction represents GSA's confidence that the many enhancements we have implemented in our business processes will be positively reflected in our cost structure.

All existing and new Occupancy Agreements and Client Billing Records for 2008 have been amended to reflect the new discounted fee. You will have noticed this cost-savings with the most recent billing cycle.

Another positive step we have taken in 2008 is to reset the Washington, DC benchmark for the Tenant Improvement General Allowance from \$31.92 to \$35.07. The General Allowance sets the amount of money that PBS provides for basic office space tenant alteration work. This allowance is reviewed each year to determine if adjustment is needed to keep pace with the average cost of construction. It is further adjusted for other major cities and localities by multiplying the index city amount by the appropriate local construction cost factor or index. This construction index is also adjusted periodically and, in some cities, the index may go down.

As such, it is important to note that even though the General Allowance is increasing, the local construction indexes will vary depending on the market. Therefore, the total allowance for a given city may not increase.

Our Regional Account Managers (RAMs) have previously provided additional details to many of our client agencies. Should you have any questions, please contact the appropriate RAM. (Please see our "Ask a RAM" article on page 7.)

As our efficiencies continue to improve, we are confident that we will strengthen our capabilities, continue to reduce overall costs, and help your budget dollars go further. 

Providing for SSA Space Needs While Meeting Goals of Local Communities

The Social Security Administration (SSA) celebrated the opening of their new Northeast Philadelphia District Office with an Open House on November 8, 2007. The new facility, which had been a movie theater heavily damaged by fire, was renovated into Class A office space for the SSA. GSA Mid-Atlantic Region secured the new lease on Welsh Road in Philadelphia and worked closely with the building owner to manage the renovations.

"GSA did a wonderful job designing the interior spaces of our new office," said Peggy Wilson, SSA Field Services Team Leader. "Kudos to GSA space planning."

Established within the community in 1939, SSA's Northeast Philadelphia District Office is now the largest District office in


the region. It services over 100,000 Social and Supplemental Security beneficiaries and pays over \$82 million worth of benefits each month.

"Kudos to GSA space planning."
— Peggy Wilson,
SSA Field Services Team Leader

GSA's recent work with the SSA also includes a lease contract awarded in October 2007 for nearly 7,000 square feet of office space in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. GSA worked closely with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the city of East Stroudsburg, one of five EPA Green Communities in the United States, to incorporate a Green Award factor into the Source Selection

Plan for the project. GSA was then able to evaluate each offer based on how well the contractor partnered with the East Stroudsburg community on green initiatives.

Sue McDowell of the EPA Region 3 team praised GSA for its commitment to incorporating green initiatives into SSA's lease contract. "I commend GSA for seeing the importance of Monroe County's Green Community designation and their overall efforts to integrate environmental considerations as part of their growth and development goals."

GSA's work in Philadelphia and East Stroudsburg demonstrates a continuing commitment to providing superior space for the SSA, while working seamlessly to meet the goals of local communities. 

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Going Green Saves Green

The solar panel initiative is a result of GSA's partnership with the state of New Jersey through the Customer On-Site Renewable Energy (CORE) program, which is run by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU). The CORE program encourages businesses to utilize clean energy alternatives.

Installation of the solar panels demonstrates GSA's commitment to integrating energy saving tactics into effective business practices, while also providing important savings to taxpayers. Speaking at the celebration, BPU Commissioner Joseph Fiordaliso discussed the advantages of the solar panel initiative for both the government and the community. "A commitment to clean energy benefits our environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and lowers the operational costs of governmental facilities, which saves taxpayers money," said Fiordaliso.

GSA has made great strides over the past 20 years, overseeing a 30% decrease in energy consumption within federal buildings across the country. GSA is now working to comply with new federal energy initiatives that require further energy reduction in the workplace. Currently, GSA operates its facilities at 5% below cost of similar buildings in the private sector and pays 12% less for utilities.

Through initiatives such as the Clarkson S. Fisher U.S. Courthouse Annex solar panel installation, GSA continues to improve operational and energy efficiency throughout its federal facilities. Please visit www.gsa.gov/green to learn more about GSA's "Go Green" initiative. 



ENERGY STAR® labels were recently awarded to several federal facilities within the Mid-Atlantic Region: William J. Green Jr. Federal Building and James A. Byrne U.S. Courthouse, Robert N.C. Nix Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, and the U.S. Custom House in Philadelphia; Walter E. Hoffman U.S. Courthouse in Norfolk, Virginia; and the Federal Buildings in Norfolk and Richmond, Virginia. These ENERGY STAR designations recognize GSA's efforts to manage these facilities through measures that reduce energy consumption and costs. Please visit www.energystar.gov for more information on the ENERGY STAR program.

Art in Federal Facilities: Preserving a Cultural Legacy

GSA's Fine Arts collection consists of permanent and moveable mural paintings, sculptures, architectural or environmental works of art, and works on paper dating from the 1850s. The collection is one of our nation's oldest and largest public art collections. The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is committed to maintaining and preserving this collection as an important piece of our national and cultural heritage.

As part of this commitment, GSA recently completed restoration of the *Bicentennial Dawn* sculpture in the James A. Byrne U.S. Courthouse in Philadelphia, and partnered with local agencies to exhibit artwork in the Clarkson S. Fisher Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Trenton, NJ.

The Louise Nevelson sculpture, *Bicentennial Dawn*, was originally installed and dedicated in January 1976 to coincide with the "dawning" of the Bicentennial. Considered one of Nevelson's most notable assemblages, the sculpture is comprised of 29 painted wood totems, or columns, which are arranged into three groupings. It measures 15 feet high by 90 feet long by 30 feet wide. Since its original installation, the sculpture's paint has progressively deteriorated, resulting in flaking and complete paint detachment in several areas. Restoration was necessary, but would not be easy due to the size, complexity, and condition of the sculpture. In November 2006, GSA called in a team of professional art handlers who disassembled the sculpture into approximately 75 pieces. The artwork was packaged and transported to a conservator in Ohio via a climate controlled truck.



Nevelson's Bicentennial Dawn sculpture creates a vibrant environment at the James A. Byrne U.S. Courthouse located in Philadelphia.

The artwork received extensive restoration. Old coats of paint were carefully removed, defects were filled, and all surfaces were sanded. Exposed wood was covered with a strong adhering soy oil primer followed by a latex-color coat that matched the original paint color. Plywood and laminate from the artwork's pedestal bases were removed, new substrate of micro-density fiberboard was installed, along with new laminate designed to match the paint color of the sculpture. The pedestal bases were also stabilized and leveled.

To reinstall the sculpture in July 2007, GSA assembled the same team of professional art handlers who removed *Bicentennial Dawn* in 2006. The lighting system in the area of the sculpture was revamped to provide better lighting for viewing and to automatically illuminate the sculpture after dark. The vestibule housing the sculpture was also redesigned to include a new entrance that makes the artwork more accessible to the public.

Bicentennial Dawn is one of Nevelson's best examples of the atmospheric environmental compositions for which she is known. She described her sculpture as part of her continuous search "for a new seeing, a new image, a new insight, a new consciousness. This search includes the object as well as the in-between places — the dawns and the dusks, the objective world, the heavenly spheres, the places between the land and the sea."

Nevelson (1899-1988) was born in Kiev and became one of the most influential American sculptors of the twentieth century. Her art can be found in almost every museum in Europe and America. Her well-known works include *Erol Beker Chapel of the Good Shepherd* located at St. Peter's Church in New York City, *Sky Cathedral* which resides at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and *Statue of Atmosphere and Environment XII* located at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

"We are pleased to invite the Philadelphia community to view this remarkable sculpture and to join us in celebrating this great artist," said GSA Regional Administrator Barbara L. Shelton. "It is through the art on display at our federal buildings, like *Bicentennial Dawn*, that we are able to create a cultural legacy for the citizens of this country."



Nevelson (left), pictured here with former first lady Betty Ford, was one of the most influential American sculptors of the twentieth century.

Public display of art in government buildings allows local communities to share in this cultural legacy. In 2007, GSA collaborated with the U.S. District Court of New Jersey, the Historical Society for the U.S. District Court of New Jersey, the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, and the U.S. Marshals Service for an exhibit titled, *Art For Everyone: Murals and Paintings by Charles W. Ward*, on display in the Clarkson S. Fisher Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Trenton, New Jersey.

Charles Ward (1900-1962) was a native of Trenton. His 1935 mural *Progress of Industry* was one of the first murals painted for a post office under the Public Works of Art Project, President Roosevelt's earliest New Deal art programs. This mural was for the U.S. Post Office in Trenton, which has since been renamed



The exhibition, Art for Everyone: Murals and Paintings by Charles W. Ward, was displayed in the Clarkson S. Fisher Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Trenton.

and is known today as the Clarkson S. Fisher Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse. By 1937, Ward completed two additional murals titled *Rural Delivery* and *The Second Battle of Trenton* for the same building. All three murals are installed on the first floor and depict scenes from Trenton industries of the 1930s.

In addition to these three New Deal murals, nearly 40 Ward paintings, drawings, archival photos and documents were on display. The subjects of these works captured still life, portraits, and landscapes along with many other pieces completed by the artist during his lifetime.

GSA is currently working to improve lighting on all three New Deal murals and to maximize visibility of the *Progress of Industry* mural by redesigning a nearby partition wall.

GSA is committed to preserving its inventory of fine art, as well as to appropriately use artwork to enhance and promote high-quality environments for federal agencies and the public they serve. Please contact our GSA Mid-Atlantic Region Fine Arts Officer **Eileen Giordano** at (215) 446-4623 or eileen.giordano@gsa.gov for more information about the GSA Fine Arts program, or visit www.gsa.gov/finearts for a listing of all fine art installations across the country. 




Charles Ward's self portrait was among the pieces included in the recent exhibition.

GSA Delivers New ICE Office Quickly and Seamlessly

In a May 2006 congressional mandate, the Department of Homeland Security was called upon to establish 18 new Fugitive Operations Teams (FOT) across the country by the end of fiscal year 2007. These Teams were formed to address the significant increase in alien absconders in the United States.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) turned to GSA Mid-Atlantic Region to expedite delivery of office space and furniture for the new FOT in Allentown, Pennsylvania. In November 2007, GSA delivered the crucial new office. The GSA Public Buildings Service and National Furniture Center in Washington, DC, collaborated with ICE and CBP to seamlessly deliver the new leased space and office furnishings in less than a year.

"It has been a pleasure to work with the GSA Project Team," said Norman Garsnett, CBP Logistics Management Specialist. "The GSA staff demonstrated professionalism from the site survey to the move-in."

GSA remains committed to providing superior office space, furnishings, technology, supplies, and related services to meet the dynamic workplace needs of our federal clients. 

GSA Space Acquisition Services Enable DOD to Remain Focused on Defense

The U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM), in partnership with GSA's Mid-Atlantic Region, continues to expand and update its Norfolk, Virginia headquarters. The USJFCOM is one of the nine unified commands in the Department of Defense (DOD). They develop warfighting concepts, utilizing state-of-the-art technology that simulates war strategies and their potential outcomes. The USJFCOM facility encompasses over 25 acres of secure space. GSA leases and manages much of this complex on behalf of USJFCOM.

GSA has worked closely with USJFCOM over the past several years to update and improve intelligence capabilities. A new 43,000 square foot facility was added in January 2005, providing space for Joint Experimentation. A Consolidated Security Office was renovated in 2006, providing additional security as part of an expanded Joint Training & Analysis Simulation Center. A new lease was also awarded in June 2007, providing consolidated shipping and receiving services in compliance with DOD antiterrorism standards.

Currently, GSA is working with USJFCOM to expand the Joint Technology Exploration Center (JTEC) on the command's campus. Phase I of the construction project was completed in September 2007. It added 30,000 square feet to the existing

compound, providing more space for the Special Operations Command and the Joint Intelligence Lab. The expanded JTEC facility will include a 4,500 square foot virtual reality room to be utilized for warfighting experiments and simulations.


The expansion space will support integrated training, computer simulation, intelligence, special operations training, and provide overall assistance to ongoing military operations.

“Coordinating with GSA on new lease construction and renovation projects has been smooth and effective.”

*— Ronald Klutz,
USJFCOM representative*

Allowing GSA to manage space acquisition and build-out on their behalf has enabled USJFCOM to remain focused on its mission. “Coordinating with GSA on new lease construction and renovation projects has been smooth and effective,” said USJFCOM

representative Ronald Klutz. “GSA continues to be engaged in our lease issues here at USJFCOM, and their ability to adapt and work quickly helps us remain focused on our vital mission.”

GSA's Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) is also working closely with USJFCOM to provide modernized equipment. To date, FAS has procured over one million dollars in systems furniture for the command center. GSA continues to work with USJFCOM to deliver modernized office and laboratory space that the command center utilizes to complete its mission. 

You're Invited! Attend the 2008 GSA Products and Services Expo

The annual GSA Expo in Anaheim, California, is designed to be a complete experience for federal and military personnel. Admission is FREE and this year the event provides several training courses targeted for those customers who manage real property operations for their agencies. A sample of workshops available includes:

Green is Not Just a Color

Sustainable operating practices including: reduction of energy and water use and better indoor air quality through product choice.

GSA is "LEEDING" the Way for Successful High Performance Buildings

Incorporate sustainable principles when renovating current space or building new facilities.

Are You Still an Energy Hog?

Successful ways to meet the latest energy requirements.

It Isn't Easy Being Green


Green initiatives in the furniture, furnishings, and copier industries, including use of recycled products and how those items support LEED certification.

GSA's Energy Management Services

Energy audits and accompanying services as well as energy management program support.

Your Legal Responsibility for Buying Green

Tools for a successful green purchasing program to meet the latest laws and executive orders.

Register today for the Expo at **(888) 272-5565** or expo.gsa.gov where you can also download a complete listing of all classes being offered. Visit the Training page and click on “2008 Training Matrix.” 



Ask a RAM

Reimbursable Work Authorizations (RWAs)

QUESTION: What recent changes has GSA made regarding reimbursable services and Reimbursable Work Authorizations?

ANSWER: Reimbursable Work Authorizations (RWAs) are established to capture and bill for the cost of alterations, renovations, repairs, or services that are over and above the basic operations financed through rent in space managed by GSA.

Feedback from our customers highlighted opportunities for improvement in GSA's process and management of reimbursable services. Based on this feedback, GSA has implemented a number of changes in fiscal year 2008. The following changes focus on improving service to our federal customers through increased flexibility and user friendliness in our RWA process, as well as improved communication on the status of customer RWAs:

Improved Customer Billing Statement: In December 2007, GSA introduced a new and improved RWA Bill. The bill provides more detailed information to assist our customer agencies with the reconciliation of their project costs. The format of the new bill provides more details, including:

- customer and GSA treasury account symbols
- customer fund year and fund type
- customer and GSA BPN/DUNS information
- customer requisition ID (if provided)
- fiscal station number (for DOD customers, if provided)
- outstanding authorized amount balance of the RWA
- financial activity for the current billing period
- detailed information related to current and cumulative billed amounts


Bills are posted on the GSA Bill View website at www.finance.gsa.gov/billview and are accessible via the same login as the RWA Search website.

Expansion of "F" Type RWA Thresholds: To provide our customers with more flexibility, we have increased the thresholds for "F" type RWAs, those which automatically close at the end of the year. The threshold has increased from \$10,000 to \$25,000 per work request, and from \$100,000 to \$250,000 per RWA per year.

Revised Reimbursable Work Authorization (RWA), GSA Form 2957: GSA Form 2957, revised in November 2007, is more user friendly and is designed to assist our customers in capturing crucial information. Improvements to the form include:

- new fields added to support Department of Treasury requirements for interagency transactions
- improved instructions that better define the requirements for each block on the form
- a clearer explanation of the statutory authorities governing the reimbursable agreement
- elimination of obsolete blocks on the form

To access and download the revised RWA form, please visit the online GSA Forms Library at www.gsa.gov/form and enter "2957" into the Search.

Should you have additional questions regarding RWAs or reimbursable services available through GSA, please contact your PBS Regional Account Manager. 

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Barbara L. Shelton
Regional Administrator
GSA Mid-Atlantic Region

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