ITDS e-Newsletter

A Message from the Chairman

I'd like to share some thoughts on the progress we are making toward fulfilling the ITDS vision. First, I am pleased that our effort to expand the membership of the ITDS Board of Directors to include all PGAs means that I can ask you to join me in welcoming new board members (see page 2 for more details). Second, we are continuing to advance the basic building blocks necessary to complete the project by:

-Establishing of a standard data set- While much work has been done, much remains to be done. Working with CBP and the ACE Support Team, we are further specifying agency data requirements to be able to reduce data requirements and ensure incorporation of those requirements into ACE.

-Conforming to international standards- In order to ensure the ITDS data set and the messages used to transmit that data conform to international standards, we are aligning U.S. data requirements to the World Customs Organization (WCO) Data Model as part of our data harmonization efforts.

-Delivering information to the PGAs- Progress has been made on this front, as I write, 137 PGA subject matter experts representing 16 agencies are online and benefiting from access to the information the ACE Secure Data Portal. In addition, PGAs are contributing to the development of the Entry Summary, Accounts and Revenue and Cargo Control and Release capabilities in ACE. Concurrently, CBP and the ACE Support Team are working with PGAs to develop detailed Concept of Operations papers that specify each agency's requirements. These "ConOps" will establish what information agencies want out of system, when they want it, and how they want it delivered.

-Identifying all legal requirements for agency participation in ITDS- This is another area where strides have been made. We established an interagency legal group that has identified the applicable requirements for agency participation in ITDS, and CBP has begun a process for drafting a detailed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each agency.

-Identifying IT costs, responsibilities, and functionality for PGAs- We are not far enough down the development road to have enabled PGAs to fully specify their own ACE related IT roles and their associated costs, but as we advance on other issues, these will become tangible.   -**Tim Skud, Chairman, ITDS Board of Directors**

Understanding Foreign Trade Data-
Back By Popular Demand

The U.S. Census Bureau's Foreign Trade Division held its 2nd "Understanding Foreign Trade Data" seminar on May 18, 2006. Of particular interest to PGAs that use the Census Bureau's trade statistics in executing their missions, this day-long session focused on the types of data included in the statistics and data quality issues.

Diane Oberg of the U.S. Census Bureau

According to Senior Foreign Trade Advisor Diane Oberg the seminar's purpose is two-fold: "First, it helps PGA data users better understand the nature of Census Bureau trade data and calls their attention to issues that could affect their analyses. Second, as more PGAs gain access to the ACE Secure Data Portal, the seminar helps PGAs recognize the differences between ACE data and Census Bureau data, that is, why raw data tabulations may differ from the official trade statistics." "It is important for PGAs to understand the conceptual and definitional issues that underlie the trade statistics," said Diane. "That way, they can make appropriate decisions regarding how to analyze and use the data." Representatives from seven PGAs were in attendance. If interest remains high, the Foreign Trade Division will host another session this fall/winter.

Excerpts from the Statement of Timothy E. Skud, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Tax, Trade, and Tariff Policy U.S. Department of the Treasury

Testimony Before the Senate Committee on Finance, Hearing on Authorizations of Customs and Trade Functions
April 26, 2006

The goal of ITDS is to make the Federal Government's collection and use of international trade data less burdensome and more efficient.

Under the ITDS concept, agencies would harmonize their data requirements, eliminating redundancies and minor definitional differences. Traders would submit standardized electronic import and export data one time to a single collection point, commonly called the "single window." The data would then be distributed to agencies depending on what information they need to perform their respective trade-related missions.

ITDS is intended to: Provide convenient access for Federal agencies to data on international trade that are more accurate, complete and timely.

Contrary to what the name may suggest, ITDS is not a separate computer system. The ITDS concept will be implemented as a feature of Customs and Border Protection's ACE Project, the Automated Commercial Environment.

One aspect of ITDS is already operational. Sixteen of the participating ITDS agencies already have access to data on import transactions, through the web-based ACE portal. Much groundwork for next steps has been accomplished. With the participation of all the involved agencies, an effort to identify and harmonize their trade data requirements is well underway. Those data requirements are being aligned with data sets developed by the G-7 countries and the World Customs Organization so that we will be closer to the vision of having internationally as well as nationally harmonized trade reporting.

FYI

June 8: Legal & Policy Group

June 21, July 27: PGA ACE Secure Data Portal training

June 22, July 20: ITDS Board of Directors

June 27, July 26: Program Support Group

Program Updates

Welcome New Board Members: We are pleased to announce the election of Sandra L. Kusumoto, Director of Certification & Licensing, Federal Maritime Commission; Christopher Rogers, Chief of the Trade and Marine Stewardship Division, Office of International Affairs, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; John H. Payne, Assistant Deputy Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; and Jerry Bowerman, of the Alcohol and Tobacco, Tax and Trade Bureau, as the newest members of the ITDS Board of Directors.

ESAR & CCR Highlights

Entry Summary, Accounts and Revenue: As a result of the business process development with CBP, PGA, and trade community subject matter experts, ESAR drop A1 passed the Critical Design Review (CDR) with no conditions attached on May 4, 2006. The ITDS ESAR team will be presenting an overview of this gate review's key findings to the PGAs in June.

Cargo Control and Release: The ITDS CCR team will be conducting a series of workshops in June for the PGAs with admissibility authority. These sessions will seek to identify possible "Requested Actions", that is, the actions PGAs will request CBP take on their behalf when CCR drop M1 (e-Manifest Rail and Sea) is deployed. Work on defining requirements for drop M2 (Air Manifest and Release) will begin in the coming month as well with multi-agency workshops to derive common requirements for similar system processes.