

ITDS e-Newsletter



Fall 2005

A Message from the Chairman

This fall marks an important event in the history of the ITDS program—representatives from the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB); Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS); Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); Federal Communications Commission (FCC); Federal Maritime Commission (FMC); Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS); International Trade Administration, Import Administration (ITA, IA); International Trade Commission (ITC); National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA); Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC); U.S. Foreign-Trade Zones Board; and U.S. Census Bureau became the first PGA users of ACE!

This fall also marks the occasion of Rich Kuzmack's retirement. Rich, who served as an advisor to the Board from the Office of Management and Budget and more recently from DHS' Office of the Chief Information Officer, was one of the "parents" of ITDS, having been involved with the project even before its official "birth" in 1995. He co-authored the report from the IT06 Steering Committee, which recommended the establishment of the ITDS Board of Directors. The Vice President then acted upon that recommendation and the Board and its mission were begun in earnest in 1996. The ITDS community would like to thank Rich for his clear guidance on governance, budget and other matters throughout the years. Rich's work has contributed to the current success of the ITDS program, success evidenced by the first PGA users of ACE. For more information about the ITDS program, please feel free to email us at ask.itds@associates.dhs.gov. -Tim Skud, Chairman, ITDS Board of Directors

The ACE Secure Data Portal-Seeing is Believing

Over 70 Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) representing 12 PGAs participated in one of several hands-on ACE Secure Data Portal training classes conducted throughout the past month. The agenda focused on familiarizing the SMEs with the key features of the PGA interim user role and included a session in which the participants executed job-specific scenarios with the guidance of the instructors.



Cornelia Mueller of APHIS, and ACE instructor, Jennifer Peters

The Portal offers PGA users several advantages over current processes, including a searchable, customizable version of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS), detailed contact information for nearly 800 trade accounts, and of course, near real-time access to account, cargo entry and entry summary data. According to Jennifer Peters, ACE instructor and

member of the eCP ITDS team, a number of SMEs are especially pleased with the Portal's adaptability, "It allows the user to be an active participant in data collection by searching the Portal and tailoring reports to suit agency needs." Katie Nelson of the U.S. Census Bureau says that, "ACE is user-friendly and intuitive. It offers

flexibility in the way that we can sort and view data." Keith Daly of the ITA, IA, agrees, "I very much like the built-in flexibility. You can start with a standard report and then add additional data fields as you need them. For the most part, parameters are easy to change, and your queries can be saved to be used again. I don't have the rights to create new queries on the ACS, so it appears that I will have vastly more capability with ACE."

Additional training sessions will be held as more PGA SMEs obtain approval to access the Portal and the ITDS team will be developing a methodology to provide training to those SMEs located outside the greater Washington, DC area. The team also plans to seek all-important feedback via surveys.



PGA Spotlight:
Elizabeth Whiteman
FTZ Analyst
U.S. Foreign-Trade Zones Board

As an analyst with the staff of the U.S. Foreign-Trade Zones Board (FTZB) at the Department of Commerce, Elizabeth Whiteman is quite familiar with the challenges associated with communicating with other government agencies and the trade community via outmoded and disparate processes. In order to collect the data needed to accomplish the FTZB's mission of monitoring the activity within the country's 250 zones and 470 subzones, the FTZB works closely with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and foreign-trade zone operators. Interactions occur by paper, phone, email, or mail, as FTZ admissions are not currently automated.

Elizabeth and key members of the trade community were able to address this with CBP during the nine-month Entry Summary, Accounts, and Revenue (ESAR) blueprinting phase, which provided PGA participants the opportunity to share their business needs with those designing and building ACE. According to Elizabeth, the collaborative nature of the blueprinting workshops devoted to FTZ account management yielded very positive results. "Those who struggle with the lack of FTZ automation were in attendance, there was a real resolve to find a solution that would benefit all," said Elizabeth. That resolve fashioned an ACE account maintenance process that will serve as a great data resource for the FTZB, CBP, and the trade community. The FTZB will maintain general zone information, including site lists and approvals for zone manufacturing authority, so when a member of the trade community applies to operate within a zone, all pertinent data will be right there in ACE. "In designing this account structure," said Elizabeth, "we are taking something that is patchwork right now, not automated, and creating a system that will work well for everyone." For the FTZB, being able to access one centralized, common platform for its data needs will advance its mission to oversee compliance with the FTZ Act and its associated federal regulations. "The data that will be available through ACE will significantly enhance our monitoring ability," said Elizabeth—more evidence that ACE is on target to provide the right information, to the right people, at the right time and place.

For Your Information

- October 19: Legal & Policy Committee meeting
- October 20, November 17: ITDS BoD meeting
- October 24: Program Support Group meeting
- November 2: PGA ConOps DRAFT due
- December 14: PGA ConOps FINAL due

The **Statistical Data Users Group** will hold a seminar on Understanding and Using Foreign Trade Data on Wednesday, **November 16**, in Washington, D.C. The seminar will include general background information, address common questions about the trade data and include a demonstration of most of the Census Bureau's foreign trade data products. **Contact Diane Oberg** (diane.c.oberg@census.gov or 301-763-2223) for more information.

At last month's Trade Support Network, **The ITDS Data Harmonization team** delivered a report to the trade community that included the ACE/ITDS Standard Data Set elements along with a listing of the corresponding PGAs that utilize each data element. The report was extremely well received and the trade community is very interested in providing feedback to the ITDS team. Members of the trade community also indicated that the report will be discussed at upcoming industry meetings.

Recognition

Thank you to **Christine Hogue** for all of her efforts on behalf of the ITDS program. As a member of the CBP ITDS team, Christine was a strong advocate for PGA integration into ACE. She most notably advanced this cause by skillfully managing the background investigation process—enabling PGA SMEs to take part in ACE workshops as well as to gain interim access to the ACE Secure Data Portal. All the best to Christine in her new position on the ACE ESAR Communications, Training, Outcomes, and Deployment team. **Sherri Rudy** of the CBP ITDS Team will be assuming Christine's responsibilities as the PGA BI manager; please contact her at sherri.rudy@dhs.gov with any questions.