

ITDS e-Newsletter

March 2007



In This Issue:

- Chairman's Message
- TSN ITDS Committee Meeting
- Distance Learning ACE Portal Training
- Program Updates

To submit questions or comments, send an e-mail to:
ask.itds@associates.dhs.gov

A Message from the Chairman

As you know, the SAFE Port Act mandates that all Federal agencies with import and export documentation requirements participate in ITDS. We have made significant strides in identifying and contacting such agencies. It is my pleasure to welcome the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Consumer Product Safety Commission to the PGA Community, the first agencies to join since the SAFE Port Act was signed. Welcome to the team!

Our progress with regard to data harmonization has been significant as well. Through the hard work of PGAs and the Data Harmonization team, we are harmonizing and standardizing many of the PGA data elements. Although there is much work yet to do, this effort will greatly simplify ACE transactions for Trade users.

Tim Skud – Chairman, ITDS Board of Directors

TSN ITDS Committee: PGAs Wanted!

The Trade Support Network (TSN) ITDS Committee ushered in 2007 with its first meeting this past February, covering a myriad of topics that spanned from the SAFE Port Act to the Standard Data Set.

The TSN is a forum through which the Trade Community, PGAs, and CBP collaborate. The ITDS Committee is one of nine TSN Committees formed to tackle issues surrounding ACE development. Co-chaired by Trade Members Sandra Scott and Debbie Benish, the committee focuses on PGA interactions with the Trade as they pertain to ACE.

Scott, a veteran of the transportation industry, has been an advocate of ITDS since its inception. In her opinion, the TSN ITDS Committee is crucial to PGA-Trade collaboration. "This [the TSN] is the only mechanism the

Trade has to project our needs and what makes good business sense," said Scott. "It has to [make sense] for both Government and Trade."

Although Scott concedes that co-chairing the committee has been a learning curve, she is optimistic

about the committee's progress. "It has improved five hundred percent from the beginning, and we are starting to see the results of our hard work. PGAs are coming on board . . . most of these agencies have never really dealt with the trade in this way, and the way they [PGAs] are now dealing with the us is really as a partnership."

Max Castillo emphasized the



TSN ITDS Committee Chair Sandra Scott consults with TSN members at the ITDS Committee Meeting on February 16, 2007

committee's progress and importance at the last ITDS Program Support Group meeting. "These meetings are starting to facilitate great discussion. There seems to be more understanding now." Speaking to the PGAs, he said, "If ACE will enable you (your agency) to change your processes, you should use the TSN to work with the Trade."

Distance Learning ACE Portal Training Empowers PGA Representatives Across the Nation

Consider this: Ulric Sawyer is an Import Surveillance Liaison Officer for the United States Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS). In other words, he's the one who makes sure your imported meat and eggs are fresh and safe—definitely someone you want on your side! His territory spans from Syracuse, New York to northeast Maine. A crucial part of his job is using the ACE Portal to ensure certain shipments have been inspected. To use the ACE Portal most effectively, however, Sawyer needs training. But since he doesn't have time to drop by the DC beltway for training class, what should he do?

Two words: Distance Learning.

This past quarter, Sawyer and more than 15 other FSIS representatives across the nation received ACE Portal training without leaving the comforts of their own cubicles. "We knew they couldn't get to us, so we got to them," said Melissa Milne, the ACE Support Team ITDS Training Lead.

Milne's team structured a two-hour course that required only a computer, telephone, and packet of training materials. The course gave a basic overview of how to find data and generate reports through ACE. "We wanted to give them something so that they could hit the ground running."

But Milne admits that one can only run so far without getting tired, and that a two-hour crash course on ACE can be overwhelming and easily forgotten. So what was the secret to

the course's success?

There were two, really. The first was the course's simplicity. It was straightforward, well paced, and geek-speak free. "I'm not a computer genius, but I felt like everything was understandable," said Ken Goin of FSIS. In addition, the training materials laid out the course so clearly that, in Goin's words, "if the phone were off [during the training], you could still figure out a solution with just the training materials."

The second success factor was the personal attention given by the instructor. Sawyer was pleased to

receive a phone call from Kathleen Walsh, a distance learning instructor, a week after he took the course. Kathleen answered Sawyer's questions and ensured he was finding the data he needed. "I was glad to have an extra session with the trainer that was catered to what I really needed."

Considering the steak and eggs I had for breakfast this morning, I'm glad he found the data he needed, too.

To ask questions related to ITDS training, please send an email to Melissa. Milne@associates.dhs.gov

Program Updates

Upcoming Events

Board of Directors: March 15, 9:30-11 AM, USITC

Program Support Group: March 20, 9:30 AM, EPA



CCR

The CBP M2 requirements team continues to meet with select PGAs individually. This collaborative effort ensures that PGA business reporting requirements are understood clearly and implemented efficiently into ACE.

ESAR

The ESAR Accounts Management team has begun system integration testing (SIT) for drop A1. The team plans to bring in stakeholders, including PGAs, to get hands-on experience with the test system during this phase.