

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION COMES TO DENVER

Leslie L. Plomondon



Leslie Plomondon
GSA Region 8 Administrator

*“Success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it.”
~ Henry David Thoreau*

The Democratic National Convention (DNC) took over the city of Denver during the week of August 25 through 29, 2008. Politician and celebrity sightings were the talk of the town, while security was the talk of GSA Region 8.

Region 8 foresaw that the DNC presented a perfect opportunity to build on an existing relationship with the Secret Service and help foster a new one with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) by offering a One GSA strategy.

Approximately two years ago, Region 8’s **Mike Casper**, Business Center Manager, **Tim Horne**, Acting FAS ARA and **Jeff Brakke**, One GSA Officer, presented the idea of GSA as a “total service provider” to the Secret Service. A total solutions provider meant enhanced relationships and trust from customers and the ability of One GSA to continue to offer more than just traditional workspace solutions in the future. The proposal was accepted and a

project team was established.

PBS realized they needed to fully understand the capabilities of FAS in order to truly offer One GSA Services. In an effort to do this, FAS employee **Marlene Florman** was selected to work at the Downtown Denver field office several days a week.

Additionally, GSA appointed **John Leatherman** as Transaction Manager and the single point of contact (SPC) for all customer special event needs.

With the core project team in place, planning and preparation was underway. The project scope included the following One GSA Services:

- Constructed a 20,000 square foot space for a coordinating center as well as a 3,000 square foot space for a credentialing center; both located at the Rogers Federal Building in downtown Denver.
- Constructed an 11,000 square foot multi-agency communication center at the Denver Federal Center in Lakewood, Colorado. This center was open 24 hours a day and occupied by more than 100 federal, state and local law enforcement personnel.
- Negotiated and procured a lease with the United States Postal Service for the United States Secret Service at Denver International Airport. This included 23,000 square feet of building space and 258 parking spaces.
- Leased 150 parking spaces in downtown Denver for law enforcement.

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- Constructed a 5,000 square foot space for the FBI's Joint Operations Command Center located at the Denver Federal Center's Building 810.
- Dennis Killinger, Emergency Management Specialist, coordinated a team to support and staff FEMA's Interim Operating Facility in Littleton, Colorado.
- Todd Tangye, Regional Security Manager, along with manned support, represented GSA inside the Multi-Agency Command Center. This allowed for immediate and accurate information to be shared with the United States Secret Service and all other law enforcement entities concerning GSA's assets.



After much planning and preparation, the DNC came and went without a hitch. GSA's role in the DNC will be remembered for years to come. The Secret Service and FBI benefited from the One GSA business approach by being conveniently located near the convention activities. Additionally, the workspace accommodated staff for round-the-clock coverage before and during the 2008 DNC. Federal and local law enforcement benefited from shared sources of information that allowed for rapid threat analysis by police, fire, bomb management, and emergency response teams.

By the end of the convention, nearly 80 GSA associates put in their time and hard work to ensure success for our customers. Each associate made Region 8 and GSA proud. After the convention, acting GSA Administrator Jim Williams wrote the following note to me, "My congratulations to you and the entire team for doing our part to ensure a key part of our democratic process went well. Thanks for a job well done."

Community Involvement

The Hatch Act & "Pernicious Political Activities"

Leigh Ann Bunetta



With the presidential election coming in November, everyone is becoming familiar once again with the Hatch Act and how it regulates the partisan political activities of federal employees. But, why did Congress find it necessary to pass such a law in the first place?

Officially known as "An Act to Prevent Pernicious Political Activities," the law originated out of a concern on the part of conservative Democrats and Republicans in the late 1930s that federal civil servants working for the Works Progress Administration (WPA) were using jobs and monies under their control to influence congressional elections.

Senator Carl Hatch (D-NM), described by Time Magazine as a "longtime missionary for purity in politics" with a "passion... to put honor, good faith and probity into politics," tried unsuccessfully to pass legislation in 1935 and 1938 that would regulate the political activities of federal workers.

During the 1938 congressional elections, there were widespread allegations in a number of states that the WPA funds and staff had been used to help New Deal liberals get re-nominated as well as to attempt to unseat conservative Democrats. These activities angered many congressmen who feared that President Roosevelt would use the federal workforce as a political machine.

As a result, in 1939, Hatch was able to quickly gather enough support to get his legislation passed by Congress in a matter of months and, by August, it became law. The next year it was amended to also cover state employees whose salaries were paid wholly or in part from federal funds.

The U.S. Supreme Court has twice upheld the constitutionality of the Hatch Act ruling that the government's need for "orderly management of administration" outweighed federal workers' freedom of expression. In 1993, the Hatch Act was amended to permit most federal workers to contribute money to political organizations and campaign for or against candidates in partisan elections.

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Federal employees are still barred from using their official authority or influence to interfere with an election, solicit political contributions from the general public, or engage in political activity while on duty. The following lists provide only some of the do's and don'ts:

Employees may:

- Register and vote as they choose
- Assist in voter registration drives
- Express opinions about candidates and issues
- Contribute money to political organizations
- Attend political fundraising functions

Employees may NOT:

- Engage in political activity while on duty
- Engage in political activity in any government office
- Engage in political activity while using a government vehicle
- Wear political buttons on duty
- Solicit, accept, or receive political contributions
- Knowingly solicit or discourage the political activity of any person who has business before the agency

Please note that government equipment, such as computers, cellular telephones, Blackberries, and Palm Pilots cannot be used to send or deliver partisan political messages or to engage in any form of political activity. Do not generate or forward political messages or campaign materials of any kind using government equipment. Visit http://www.osc.gov/library.htm#ha_fed to download an article entitled "Political Activity and the Federal Employee," written by the U.S. Office of Special Counsel.

If you have any questions on the Hatch Act, please call the Office of Regional Counsel on (303) 236-7352.

GSA Moving Five Million Tons of Brick and Mortar

Sally Mayberry

Our Services

Believe it or not, the GSA Rocky Mountain Region is moving the oldest building in its inventory, the Odd Fellows Hall Building in Salt Lake City, Utah, from its current location to across the street. The building's move is necessary in order to build a new U.S. District Court Annex Building next to the already existing Frank E. Moss Federal Courthouse Building.

In December 2007, GSA awarded a \$5.9 million contract to the Salt Lake City (SLC) Courthouse Project. In conjunction with the SLC project, there is also a unique sub-project that requires the physical move of the Odd Fellows Hall Building in Salt Lake City. The Odd Fellows Hall Building is a 48-foot-tall three story brick building that has been part of the city's history for 117 years. The original plan was to demolish Odd Fellows Hall. With a push of keeping the historic building as part of the landscape, GSA bought it with the plan of moving it across the street by early November 2008.

The contractor, Layton Construction, is moving the building west onto a vacant lot by using jacks to get the building onto 56 hydraulic dollies, rotating it 180 degrees and then returning it to its original location. The still-hoisted building will then travel across the street and rest in its new permanent location.

Once the project is completed, GSA will auction the building to the public. Please contact Al Camp, Project Manager, at alan.camp@gsa.gov for more information about this project.



NEWS



DENVER FEDERAL CENTER VISION TAKING SHAPE

Lisa D. Wild



As many of you know, St. Anthony Central Hospital started construction of its new campus to replace their existing 110-year facility. The area for the new hospital is just south of Center Avenue on the west side of the Denver Federal Center (DFC) near Gate 5. Expected site work activities such as building excavation are in progress with an expected construction completion date in 2010.

GSA is not only excited about bringing a new hospital to the Lakewood community, but also additional public transit opportunities, along with other development and amenities

to serve the center and surrounding areas. Over the next several months you will begin to see lots of activity in the west area of the DFC, including the reconfiguration of some entrances, streets, sidewalks and medians. This is being done to accommodate the construction of both the hospital and the new light rail system and station area into the DFC. The station area development is in the early stages, but both GSA and the City of Lakewood will continue to be involved as this plan develops to ensure long-term compatibility with the DFC and the new Master Site Plan.

The relocation of the RTD Cold Springs Park n' Ride bus facility is currently planned for 2010-2011 and the opening of the Federal Center Station is planned for 2012-2013, with the completion of RTD's West Corridor system. Visit www.rtd-fastracks.com for more information on RTD's West Corridor project.

This past August, the City of Lakewood officially adopted GSA's new Master Site Plan. This will ensure that GSA's goals and objectives for the 20+ year federal center redevelopment plan remain a priority and an integral part of the City's overall planning strategy for the area. Visit www.gsa.gov/dfcsiteplan to view the Federal Center Master Site Plan and related studies.

It is a very exciting time for the DFC, and the activities and projects of the redevelopment vision. Please contact GSA's Project Manager, Lisa Wild, at 303.236.8000 ext. 5039, or at lisa.wild@gsa.gov should you have any additional questions about these upcoming activities or projects.

EXPERIENCE A TIME MACHINE FIRST HAND

Sally Mayberry

It was a trip back to 1911 for more than 900 visitors who rode the Denver & Intermountain Railroad Electric Interurban No. 25 train on August 9,



2008. The Rocky Mountain Railroad Historical foundation hosted an open house for Denver-metro people of all ages. Senior visitors reminisced about their recollections of riding Denver's once vast 300 mile trolley system while others experienced their first ride on an antique trolley car. Additional entertainment that added to the experience included a transportation art display by Joe Priselac including a number of vintage cars.

Please contact Darrell Arndt at 303-667-4797 or go to www.rockymtnrrclub.org for more information or to schedule a time to see this trolley.

Did you know that the Denver Federal Center (DFC) has a small museum that has more than 300 artifacts dating back as far as the 1950's? At one time, close to 20,000 people worked around the clock at the DFC. To schedule a tour and for more information, visit www.gsa.gov/dfcmuseum or call Leslie Galluzzo at 303.236.8000 ext. 2289.



Tread Lightly, Reducing Your Carbon Footprint

Bridget H. Berninger

In the past year, “carbon footprint” has slipped into our vernacular and become a household phrase. Used commonly in the news media, at the office and in schools, it seems the phrase is here to stay.

Wikipedia defines a carbon footprint as “a measure of the impact human activities have on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced, measured in units of carbon dioxide.”

Carbon footprint is not a phrase that is accepted everywhere. Many say that the carbon footprint takes the responsibility away from big business and places it on the individual to single-handedly reduce carbon emissions.

Whatever your belief is, there is nothing harmful about awareness of our personal use of energy, the amount of waste we produce, and what steps we can take to help offset some of it.

Calculate!

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed a Personal Emissions Calculator for individuals and families to estimate their personal greenhouse gas emissions. Using your latest electric and gas bills, miles on your car, and household waste, a total emissions estimate is calculated.

Take the following path to the EPA Personal Emissions Calculator:

http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind_calculator.html

Motivate!

Once you calculate your personal emissions, you can take action. Often, we have the most control over our carbon emissions at home. Here are a few steps you can take to reduce your carbon footprint:

Need some fresh air? Open those windows then purify the air in your house with some green house plants. Potted plants have been found to reduce toxic volatile organic compounds (VOCs) by 10 to 20% in ventilated areas. Boston ferns, Peace lilies and Devil’s ivy are some favorites!

Kick the bottle! Try to avoid buying bottled water. Most bottled water is only reprocessed but from municipal supplies, so it’s not healthier than what you have at home. Use a home filtration system or buy portable stainless-steel or glass containers to carry water. You can reduce the 1.5 million barrels of oil used to package water each year, and prevent plastic residue from leaching into your drinking water.



dfc solar park update

The Sun Also Rises

As of August 20, 2008,
the DFC solar park had produced
1,158,000 kilowatt hours - equal to
76% of required annual production.





Spotlight on Jeff Brakke

Jeff Brakke



Jeff began his career at GSA in July of 2005 as a Lead Program Specialist for PBS at the downtown Denver Byron Rogers federal office building. The downtown Denver GSA office operated in a very diverse and dynamic environment that was conducive to meeting customer challenges and achieving successes. It was a great introduction into GSA with an outstanding team of associates.

In October 2006, he was selected and given the privilege of being the Business Center Manager for PBS buildings in Boulder, Fort Collins, Grand Junction, Colorado Springs and Lakewood. The highlight of this assignment was working with an exemplary team of professionals and being located at the David Skaggs Building in Boulder. It is one of the finest buildings in the GSA inventory with a world class location.

Last year, he was honored to be selected for the GSA Advanced Leadership Development Program (ALDP). Through his participation in the program, he gained valuable experience and relationships that helped prepare him for his current assignment. In November of last year, he enthusiastically embarked on an opportunity to work in Region 8's Federal Acquisition Service (FAS) as the Acting Assisted Acquisition Services Director. He oversees a great team that is demonstrating ongoing success in FAS business support and development. In June 2008, he was promoted to the regions OneGSA Officer. One of his goals in this role is to further develop the synergies among PBS and FAS to optimally serve customers.

Before coming to GSA, Jeff was the Director of Corporate Facilities for Advanced Energy Industries for five years, a leading producer of power supplies for high tech product markets. His worldwide responsibilities included all facilities and related services in North America, Europe and Asia. He is especially proud of establishing a showcase office and manufacturing facility in Shen Zhen, China. Before that he held various positions in Civil Engineering for the Air Force at Malmstrom AFB, Montana, for 12 years and previous to that in managing new production of Sparrow air-to-air missiles for the Navy for three years.

He has a Bachelor of Science Degree and Professional Engineering License in Mechanical Engineering, as well as a Masters of Business Administration. Jeff enjoys all the great opportunities that Colorado has to offer with his wife Theresa, daughter Michelle and sons Erik and Brandon. Some of the activities they enjoy are skiing, hiking, and attending pro and college sports games together.

Spotlight, Contributing to GSA's Success - Meet GW Emge

Sally Mayberry



GW Emge joined GSA the summer of 1991 under the Outstanding Scholar Intern Program with the Public Building Service's (PBS) Real Estate Division in Denver, Colorado. Upon graduating from the intern program in August 1993, he held a variety of positions spanning from Realty Specialist to Lead Asset Manager for the Colorado Service Center, to becoming the Program Manager for the downtown Denver Field Office, and finally landing in his current position as a Business Center Manager for the Colorado Service Center. His vast experience includes becoming a contracting officer with an unlimited warrant for real estate, being responsible for more than 150 leased locations and five federal buildings, and managing a program totaling \$6 million worth of agency reimbursable projects and \$3.5 million worth of GSA funded projects. GW was also the Leasing Contracting Officer for a six-building campus on Colorado State University land that houses over 1,200

government and contract employees for the US Department of Agriculture and US Geological Survey. This campus is now a leading research campus that is looking at maintaining land, plant, animal and nature resources in the US for the foreseeable future.

Another notable accomplishment is that he competed nationally and graduated from GSA's Advanced Leadership Development Program in 2005. This unique and rigorous 12-month program focuses to develop and enhance key business leadership skills with current work teams, organizations, and customers as the program develops an agency-wide pool of mission and skills-aligned leaders. GW graduated from the University of Colorado with a Bachelor of Science in Finance. He is a third generation Coloradoan who is an outdoor enthusiast and loves the mountains.

Spotlight on Debbie Rojas Cook

Anna Friend



Debbie Rojas Cook has been with GSA since 1997. She started her GSA career in Fleet Management at the regional office in Denver, Colorado, where she held positions in budgeting, financial management and vehicle procurement. In 2004, Debbie moved to Fort Worth, Texas, to take over the Business Management Team Leader position and later also held a management position in Vehicle Sales. Her federal career also includes nearly eight years in the United States Air Force.

Prior to GSA, she worked in the private sector for both Continental Airlines and Hertz rent-a-car while completing her education with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management from Metropolitan State College of Denver and a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Colorado.

After marrying Lanny Cook in 2008, Debbie decided to return to Denver to be closer to family. She secured a position with GSA Property Management as a Sales Chief. After a hard day's work, Debbie likes to relax by reading and playing with her grandchildren and dogs. As often as possible she and her husband indulge themselves with international travel. She recently returned from a vacation at Glacier National Park and Alberta, Canada. Next year's travels will include an Alaskan cruise. Debbie is a native of Chicago, Illinois, and has lived in several states. Her dream is to some day live in a foreign country.



Danger Ahead - Texting While Driving

Leslie Plomondon

On September 12, 2008, a Los Angeles Metrolink commuter train collided with an oncoming Union Pacific engine, resulting in the deadliest passenger train crash since 1993. While the National Transportation Safety Board has not identified the cause of the accident, they are investigating whether the engineer was texting on his phone at the time of the horrific collision.

This article is not to debate the cause of the accident, but to make the point that if an engineer of a fixed railcar can be distracted, imagine how texting can affect us while driving. We have heard the dangers of talking on our cell phones while driving and now studies are surfacing about the dangers of texting while driving.

On September 18, 2008, a United Kingdom transportation research firm, Transport Research Laboratory, on behalf of the Royal Automobile Club Foundation, conducted a study of 17-24 year old drivers on the dangers of texting while driving. Their study found that reaction times deteriorated by over one-third (35%) and steering control was 91% worse. This resulted in drivers tending to drift out of their lane more often and the ability to maintain a safe following distance fell.

Additionally, the study showed that messages which normally took an average of 22 seconds to compose, took on average 63 seconds when the texter was also driving. In one minute, a car travels half a mile at in town speed and over a mile at highway speeds. During this minute, texting can distract drivers by: (1) taking our mind off the road while composing the text; (2) using only one hand on the wheel while texting on the phone's keypad; and (3) having our eyes are on the phone not on the road ahead.

Some may discount this study since it looked at 17-24 year olds who aren't as experienced drivers as most of us. However, the reverse is that they are much more adept at texting and use it in the normal course of communication.

This safety issue is such a concern, that on September 24th, 2008, Governor Schwarzenegger signed a law making it illegal to text-message while driving in California.

The Rocky Mountain Region is geographically very large, and some of you spend many hours in the car. Therefore, I implore all of us (me included), to put down our phones and blackberries and just drive. While many do not believe there are enough minutes in the day to get everything we need done, your safety and those driving on the roads is more important than any "urgent" email.

