



CONNECTING WITH, HELPING, & SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES AND OUR COLLEAGUES

The holiday seasons bring out many extra efforts that connect us and our teams to our communities. In some cases, people create the opportunities to help, in others we join in larger ongoing efforts, and often, it is the combination of both – creatively working together to try and make things better for the less fortunate around us. We're proud to highlight three examples of how ITS has pitched in and made a big impact.

SANTA'S ITS HELPERS SUPPORT THE ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI "100 Neediest Cases"

IOD Hosting Operations Branch and Operations Security Branch employees in Saint Louis have been very active helping local charities. They came together in 2005 and 2006 to help brighten the often stressful times of the holiday season for local families.

LaWanda Burnette says, "This is the second year of adopting families from St. Louis' "100 Neediest" cases. In 2005 we adopted families for a downtown social services facility. In 2006, the Grace Hill Settlement House in South St. Louis lined us up with three families."

The 100 Neediest Cases was started by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in 1900 as a holiday



This composite photo brings together the whole team of Santa's Helpers. Front, left to right: La Wanda Burnette (Kneeling), Mary Jo Loberg, and Kathy Kasznel; back, left to right: Kevin Griffin, Marilyn Wolfe, Marilyn Miller, Bob Adams, Boyd Barnard, Tadd Simmons, Linda Thus and Doug Kassing.

event to benefit the least fortunate families in St. Louis. Over the decades the program has evolved, and today the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and the United Way of Greater St. Louis work together with the help of social service agencies to identify over 10,000 cases of area residents and families struggling to overcome poverty.

Ann Finklang got the idea in 2005. She sug-
Continued on next page.

VOLUNTARY LEAVE TRANSFERS - A Simple Gift,

A DRAMATIC, PERSONAL IMPACT - On a more direct and personal note, the Leave Transfer Program helps our fellow employees get through many kinds of health crises or medical emergencies, both the unexpected kind and those that can take a lot of time. As Theresa Sayger, ITS' leave coordinator at the Bureau of Public Debt, explains it, "The leave transfer program is a way for employees to give to others in a time of need. None of us know when we may be in a situation that will require assistance from others. Leave recipients are truly grateful for the donations they receive."

Kelly Brooks, TSD-TEXAS, received leave transfers for a few months during her husband's medical emergency. "I received more than enough leave to be able to spend time with my husband during and after radiation and chemotherapy and to go to his Doctors' appointments with him. He is doing well and will have a lot of follow up care, but so far, the prognosis is good," Kelly informed us, "I would like to thank everyone at OCIO-ITS for their leave donations so they can know how much I appreciate their generosity."
More about VLTP on page 5.

Contents

Supporting Our Communities & Colleagues	1
To the Alamo: the ITS Management Conference	2
Delivered: Deployment Highlights	3
Field Perspectives: CA/NV/HI/Pac Basin	3
Admin Pages:	3
➤ Overtime & Premium Pay, Part 2	6
➤ More on Voluntary Leave Donations	6
➤ In Lieu of Holidays	6
➤ Responsible Use of Government Property	6

Spring Calendar

	May
Cinco de Mayo	5
Mother's Day	13
ITS Management Conference	14-18
Armed Forces Day	19
Memorial Day	28

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gested that instead of the usual exchange of presents at the office, her colleagues could adopt some families through the 100 Neediest program; the vote was unanimous. The first year began with six volunteers: Ann Finklang, (retired 2006); Pat Pogue, (moved away in 2006); Marilyn Wolfe, (retired 2007); Kathy Kasznel, Marilyn Miller and LaWanda Burnette. In 2006, they grew to twelve volunteers.

For this past holiday season, the Santa's Helpers got organized on November 9, by the 20th they knew about the families, and had a list of their needs. They chose names from a hat to know who each Helper would get presents for. The team pro-

vided gifts, certificates for food and clothing, and even money to help pay utility bills. Marilyn Wolfe organized a candy sale to raise extra money, Kathy Kasznel did most of the wrapping, and Bob Adams used his truck to deliver everything to Grace Hill by Dec. 12.

“One of the persons we helped was an old lady who used to be one of the people in her community who was always helping everyone else in need.... until she became too ill to get around. It is truly a great feeling to know that we're able to help or make a difference in at least one person's heart”, La Wanda says, on behalf of all the Santa's Helpers.

COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN - ITS & OCIO LOAD SOME PLATTERS, SING SOME TUNES, FILL SOME COFFERS

In Washington, there was a full-scale USDA effort to support the Combined Federal Campaign led by Undersecretary for Rural Development and USDA/CFC Vice Chairman, Thomas Dorr. OCIO and ITS were active partners. The core team was coordinated by Wanda Swann, and included Jennifer Stout, Bernadette McGhee, Seretta Stephens, Chris Boyer, Pam Folson, Eva Lawrence, and Niles Hewlett.

At the kickoff *County Fair* event, they organized the OCIO bakesale table with Eric Won, offering homemade pies, cobblers, cookies, cakes, and other goodies. They also managed an ongoing breakfast table that offered OCIO sponsored donuts and coffee.



Photo: AT the USDA-CFC *County Fair* bakesale in the Whitten Building patio, Dale Alling, DCIO-RD, gets recommendations from Eva Lawrence (center left) as Bernadette McGhee (center right) and Kathy Marshall (right) get ready for the hungry crowd.

TO THE ALAMO: THE 2007 ITS MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE



On May 14-18, 2007, our leadership and managers will meet in San Antonio, Texas to discuss the state of ITS and receive required supervisory training. With a goal of improving our organization, management will focus on business objectives, work unit performance, problem solving, the new Cost Management Information System, and better communications. Stay tuned for the results in the May issue.



Photo: The grand finale at the CFC Talent Extravaganza: CIO Dave Combs, right; ITS Subject Matter Expert David Buckholtz, left; in between (left to right), Becky Unkenholz-AMS, Sam Morgan-RD, Ray Sheehan-RD, Becky Vaughan-FSA, Dwayne Campbell-OO, Jessica Faust-AMS. Not pictured: emcee Crain Claiborn-RD, Arthur Bruce-AMS.

A USDA talent show featured Dave Combs playing original compositions on the ivories and romantic crooning by soulful David Buckholtz. Our collective effort raised \$24,000. Although short of our challenge of \$28,000, it was almost double last years \$13,000. The USDA-CFC total was about \$1.2 million, which went to numerous causes.

DELIVERED: DEPLOYMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Below are a few of the major ITS/SCA project deployments out of a total of 30 projects deployed in March (these include numerous security patches and software upgrades).

Project Name	Agency/Initiator & ITS Release Manager	Deployment Description
Customer Service Toolkit SP3 This is the primary conservation planning tool used by NRCS for conservation planning and design, layout, and evaluation of approved conservation practices. SP3 is an upgrade to work with ArcGIS V 8.3, fixes bugs, and provides file system encryption.	NRCS - Steve Ekblad Release Manager - David Pfaffenberger	ITS/IOD/IDB delivered the Customer Service Toolkit SP3 via SMS advertisement. The installation, which occurred at nights and on weekends, successfully updated 13,000 workstations. This change will bring all users up to the most current version.
Day Light Savings Patch This patch adjusted CCE computers to the earlier than normal "Daylight Savings Time".	ITS- Barry Hodge Gordon Robinett Release Managers- Larry Scott David Pfaffenberger Frank Hoeppe	ITS delivered the Day Light Savings Patch to the EPO Servers, Exchange Servers, Windows 2000 and 2003 Servers and all XP workstations. The DST patches were a collaborative effort delivered by ADB and IDB together in 5 separate distributions, done over the March 3rd weekend, to over 40k desktops and over 4000 servers We also provided this patch to other USDA agencies at no cost.
CRP Determination Tool v1.3.0 SQL 2000 Workstation Tool Installation This is a flexible GIS mapping tool FSA County Office staff uses to work with producers/land owners to create Conservation Reserve Program Offer Scenarios. These can be then submitted to the Conservation On-Line System. Once accepted, a conservation plan is created for the submitted land, and the offer can become a contract.	FSA - Deborah Staples Release Manager - David Hyde, ITS	ITS/IOD/IDB distributed this enhanced version of the ArcView GIS Signup 33 Tool.

Field Perspectives: Technical Support Division Profiles California/Nevada/Hawaii/Pacific Basin

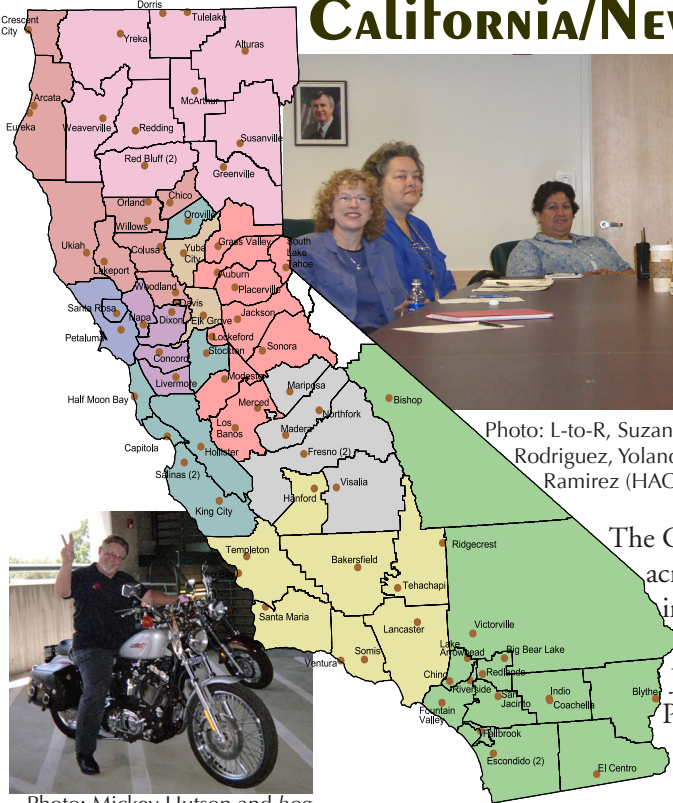


Photo: Mickey Hutson and hog, ready for assignment.



Photo: L-to-R, Suzanne Smith, Shirley Leeper, Norma Rodriguez, Yolanda Plazola, Jane't Carnes, Cesar Ramirez (HACU Intern/former), & Robert Spurgeon.

SUSAN MOORE, GROUP MANAGER, & CA/NV/HI/PAC TSD TEAMS

California is one of America's most diverse states for agriculture and climate. You have the coastal areas, mountain areas, valleys, and desert areas. California has been the number one producer of agricultural products in the US for 50 consecutive years. California's area is 163,707 square miles (California is the 3rd biggest state in the USA - only Alaska and Texas are bigger).

The California ITS team has eight staff members who support 81 offices across the state (1,115 workstations total). The State Offices are located in Davis, California, where Group Manager Susan Moore is based, is 15 minutes away from Sacramento, the state capitol. Current staff are Jane't Carnes, Patty Gerald, Mickey Hutson, Shirley Leeper, Yolanda Plazola, Norma Rodriguez, Suzanne Smith and Robert Spurgeon.

California Service Center Agency Statistics

77,000 farms on 99 million acres; about 87,000 farmers (2002); 2,749,342 people employed in the ag sector (2002); about 841,500 rural residents (2005)- from ERS Data Sheets.

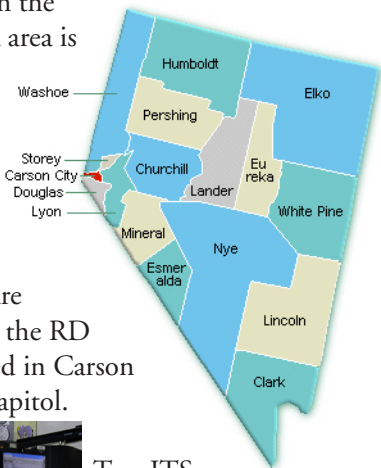
Below are agency allocations for their program and service areas (in millions of dollars).

FSA (FY2006)	NRCS Programs (FY 2006)	RD Programs (FY 2006)
Farm Loans - \$83.8	Environmental Quality Incentives Program - \$62.9	Rural Housing - \$ 208.3
Farm Support - \$373.9	Farm & Ranch Lands Protection Program - \$ 2.4	Rural Business & Cooperatives - \$ 109.5
Disaster Relief - \$57.4	Wetlands Reserve Program - \$ 12.5	Rural Utilities - \$ 73.5
Conservation - \$5.3	Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program - \$ 0.87	
	Combined Technical Assistance Programs - \$ 22.7	

Nevada is mostly mountainous and desert terrain; altitudes vary from 1,000 feet to over 13,000 feet. Climate is arid with abundant sunshine and light rainfall, with snow in the winter. The Nevada area is 110,540 square miles, 483 miles long, 320 miles wide; seventh in size.



Photo: Sam Liu.



The State Offices of NRCS and FSA are located in Reno and the RD State Office is located in Carson City, which is the Capitol.

Nevada Service Center Agency Statistics

2,889 farms on 70.3 million acres; about 2,897 farmers (2002); 137,312 people employed in the ag sector (2002); about 254,248 rural residents (2005)- from ERS Data Sheets.

Below are agency allocations for their program and service areas (in millions of dollars).

FSA (FY2006)	NRCS Programs (FY 2006)	RD Programs (FY 2006)
Farm Loans - \$ 4.916	Environmental Quality Incentives Program - \$ 8.3	Rural Housing - \$ 17.5
Farm Support - \$ 1.58	Farm & Ranch Lands Protection Program - \$ 1.7	Rural Business & Cooperatives - \$ 0.06
Disaster Relief - \$ 1.68	Wetlands Reserve Program - \$ 0.19	Rural Utilities - \$ 35.2
Conservation - \$ 0.064	Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program - \$ 0.74	
	Combined Technical Assistance Programs - \$ 5.3	

Two ITS staff, Sam Liu, based in Reno, and Mary Erickson, based in Carson City, support 14 offices across Nevada.



Photo: Mary Erickson.

Photo: Rainbow at Waikiki, Hawaii.



Hawaii is an island chain of 137 islands, encompassing an area of 6,422 square miles. There are eight main islands. The NRCS and FSA State Offices are in Honolulu, the state capital on the island of Oahu, and the RD State Office is located in Hilo on the *Big Island* of Hawaii. The State of Hawaii is approximately 2600 miles from the mainland's west coast. There are 10 field

offices in Hawaii that we support, with offices on the islands of Oahu, Molokai, Hawaii, Maui and Kauai. ITS-TSD has two engineers in Hawaii, and one each in Honolulu and Hilo.

Hawaii Service Center Agency Statistics

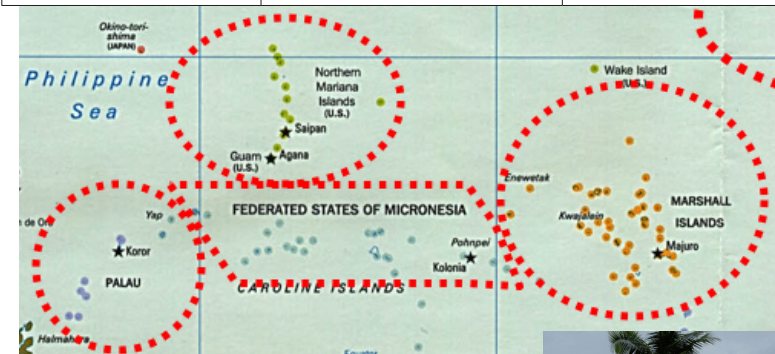
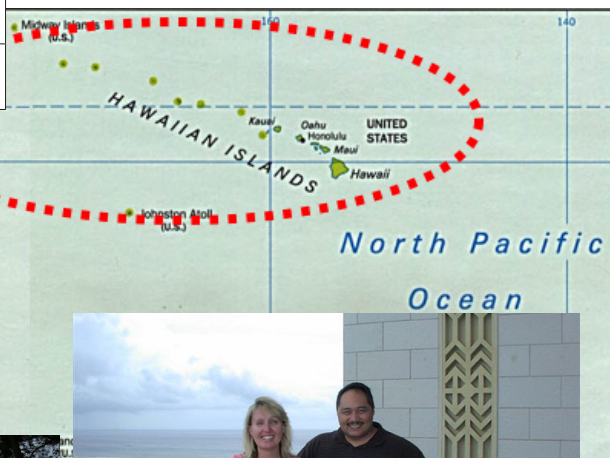
5,500 farms on 4.1 million acres (2005); about 5,398 farmers (2002); 118,904 people employed in the ag sector (2002); about 369,928 rural residents (2005)- from ERS Data Sheets.

Below are agency allocations for their program and service areas (in millions of dollars). Note: FSA combines the allocations for its programs in Hawaii and Pacific Basin*

FSA (FY2006)	NRCS Programs (FY 2006)	RD Programs (FY 2006)
* Farm Loans - \$ 2.69	Environmental Quality Incentives Program - \$ 7.5	Rural Housing - \$ 38.6
* Farm Support -\$0.098	Farm & Ranch Lands Protection Program - \$ 1.9	Rural Business & Cooperatives - \$ 1.6
* Disaster Relief - \$ 2.26	Wetlands Reserve Program - \$ 0.7	Rural Utilities - \$ 0.82
* Conservation -\$ 0.249	Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program - \$ 1.2	
	Combined Technical Assistance Programs - \$ 14.2	



Photo: Hawaii ITS Team, left to right, Carl Coon, Alex Okihara and Lilian Andrada.



The Pacific Basin area consists of American Samoa, Guam Island, Federated States of Micronesia (islands of Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, and Yap), Northern Mariana Islands (islands of Rota, Saipan, and Tinian), Island of Palau, and the Marshall Islands (island of Majuro). Most these islands are considered foreign countries except for American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. To get to the different islands you have to fly, which is time consuming and expensive. You can easily fit the whole United States in the Pacific Basin area. The islands are beautiful with nice beaches and great diving and the people are very friendly.



Photo: View at Pohnpei, Micronesia.



Photo: Susan Moore, TSD Group Manager for CA/NV/HI/PAC with John Santos, Pacific Basin TSD engineer.

We have one staffmember, John Santos, located in Guam at the Pacific Basin Area office. He supports 11 agency offices in Pac Basin. RD is located in majority of them. Rural housing programs are very important to the islanders. The Hawaii State Offices oversee agency programs in the Pac Basin.

Pacific Basin Service Center Agency Statistics- ERS data not available. **Below are agency allocations for their program and service areas (in millions of dollars).**

Note: FSA report combines the allocations for its programs in Hawaii and Pacific Basin*

FSA (FY2006)	NRCS Programs (FY 2006)	RD Programs (FY 2006)
Aggregated FSA payments to PAC - \$1.138	Environmental Quality Incentives Program - \$ 1.6	Rural Housing - \$ 37.9
* Farm Loans - \$ 2.69	Farm & Ranch Lands Protection Program - \$ 0	Rural Business & Cooperatives - \$ 5.7
* Farm Support - \$0.098	Wetlands Reserve Program - \$ 0	Rural Utilities - \$ 0
* Disaster Relief - \$ 2.26	Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program - \$ 0.015	
* Conservation - \$0.249	Combined Technical Assistance Programs - \$ 3.0	

OVERTIME AND PREMIUM PAY PRIMER II: DETERMINING PAY

This is the second in a series of articles about overtime and premium pay. In our first article we covered some basic information, including definitions and the differences between flexible work schedules and compressed work schedules. Here we will discuss how your pay is determined when you work overtime hours.

WHAT'S THE PAY? The rules for computing overtime pay depends on whether or not you are covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). As we discussed in the first article, FLSA exempt means you are not covered, and FLSA nonex-

empt means you are covered. FLSA exempt employees are covered under Title 5 of the United States Code. We know the terminology can sometimes be a little confusing. Also, the calculations can become somewhat involved, especially for FLSA nonexempt employees. The good news is that our payroll provider, the National Finance Center, automatically performs the calculations.

COMPUTATION FOR FLSA NONEXEMPT EMPLOYEES

- In most instances, the FLSA overtime hourly rate is equal to your hourly rate of basic pay multiplied by 1.5. There is a more technical explanation – but we will spare you the tedious details.
- In some instances, the computation of this overtime pay is more complicated. This would occur, for example, if you received additional pay such as night pay or pay for holiday work.
- The limitation on the hourly rate of overtime pay under Title 5 for FLSA exempt employees does not apply to the FLSA overtime for nonexempt employees. Also, the maximum biweekly or annual earnings limitations on Title 5 premium pay do not apply to FLSA overtime pay. Our tight budgetary restraints and the absence of any regulatory limitations provide good reasons for supervisors and managers to closely monitor and prudently approve overtime work.
- OPM has a good information sheet on overtime pay for nonexempt employees at <https://www.opm.gov/oca/pay/HTML/computeflsa.asp>

COMPUTATION FOR FLSA EXEMPT EMPLOYEES.

- If your rate of basic pay, which includes locality pay and special rate supplements, is equal to or less than the rate of basic pay for GS-10, step 1, the overtime hourly rate is your hourly rate of basic pay multiplied by 1.5.
- If your rate of basic pay is greater than the rate of basic pay for GS-10, step 1, the overtime hourly rate is the greater of either:
 - ❖ The hourly rate of basic pay for GS-10, step 1, multiplied by 1.5, or,
 - ❖ Your hourly rate of basic pay.
- There is a biweekly premium pay limitation that restricts the total basic pay and premium pay you can receive for any biweekly pay period. The limit is the greater of the biweekly rate for GS-15, step 10 (including any applicable special salary rate or locality rate of pay), or level V of the Executive Schedule. There is an exception to the biweekly pay limitation if you perform emergency or mission critical work. Exceeding the pay limitation only rarely is an issue; exceptions require high-level approval.
- The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has a good information sheet on overtime pay for FLSA exempt employees at: <https://www.opm.gov/oca/pay/HTML/FACTOT.asp>

This concludes the second installment of our overtime and premium pay primer series. For questions about any of the information in this article or about overtime pay in general, you may contact either:

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314-335-8711 / <mailto:phyllis.hall@stl.usda>

Theresa Sayger, Administrative Resource Center, BPD
304-480-8266 / <mailto:payroll@bpd.treas.gov>

Coming next: Overtime and Premium Pay Primer III - Compensatory Time Off

MORE ON VOLUNTARY LEAVE TRANSFERS

The Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (VLTP) allows employees to donate annual leave to another employee who has had a personal or family medical emergency and who has exhausted his or her available paid leave. The potential leave recipient must need to be absent from work, without paid leave available, for a period of at least 24 hours for a full-time employee (part-time amounts are prorated).

The ITS VLTP is overseen by the Bureau of the Public Debt. Documentation regarding the emergency is required in order to be approved for the program. All information regarding recipients and leave donors is kept very confidential, unless the recipient chooses to have his or her identity released. You can find information about the program and current recipients at: <http://arc.publicdebt.treas.gov/fs/sagociohrleavetransfer.htm>

Theresa Sayger, our leave donation coordinator at BPD, told us, “Compared to other agencies, ITS is one of the most generous when donating leave. ITS leave recipients tend to receive a large percentage, if not all, of the donations requested. There have been situations when the leave recipient received hundreds of donations within a week or so of entering the

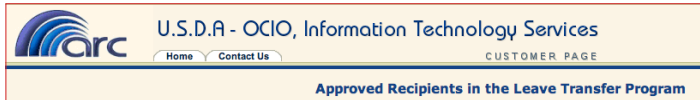


Image: BPD Web page banner for VLTP program.”

As Nancy Palmer, AMD-Employee Services Branch, explains, “Whether you are on the receiving or giving end of the VLTP, it generates some very positive feelings. It is a program that we all hope we will never need to use, but just knowing the VLTP is available offers some comfort. Most who have found themselves in situations that qualified them for VLTP have been amazed and relieved to experience the generosity of others. And those who have given donations of leave through the VLTP feel good about helping their co-workers.”

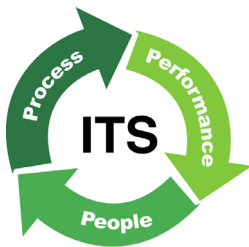
ITS VLTP Statistics*

- In 2005, ITS employees donated a total of 1,975 hours of annual leave. ITS had 3 leave donor recipients and 399 hours of the total donated went to employees in other agencies.
- In 2006, ITS employees donated a total of 1,826 hours of annual leave. ITS had 8 leave donor recipients and 207 hours of the total donated went to employees in other agencies.

* Courtesy of Theresa Sayger, BPD.

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IN LIEU OF HOLIDAYS: ADJUSTMENTS ARE MADE

There's a question we get.
We get it a lot.
So we'll give you the answer,
Right here on the spot.

It would take far too much time and energy to carry this all the way in rhyme, so I'll switch to prose for the actual explanation.

The question is: When an employee has a *compressed* or *maxiflex* schedule with fewer than 10 work days in the pay period —what happens when a holiday falls on his or her scheduled day off?

The answer is: The employee's compressed or scheduled day off stays put, but the holiday **moves** to the preceding workday.

For example: let's say Buffy is on a 5/4/9 compressed schedule and her *compressed day off* (CDO) is Monday, May 28, 2007. This happens to be the Memorial Day holiday.

Now what is the question?
Well, here is a clue:
It deals with holidays
That we call **in lieu**.

Still got you guessing?
There are more clues to come.
It concerns work schedules
That are employed by some.

If per pay period you work
On less than 10 days,
We'll walk you right through
this holiday maze.

Buffy's CDO stays
Monday, May 28, 2007;
the holiday moves to the

preceding workday, Friday, May 25, and becomes the **in lieu** of holiday. It doesn't matter whether this is the same or different pay period—since the day off doesn't move, you'll never have to worry about having one too many compressed (or scheduled) days off in the pay period.

There is an exception
It occurs only rarely
It happened in '05;
I remember it barely.
It won't in '07,
So I won't go there now.
We'll alert you the next time.
That's the ESB vow.

"Dr." Tolle

The Responsible Use and Protection of Your Government Property

Did you know that, as a Federal employee, you are directly responsible for the appropriate use of government personal property? And in some cases, you can be held financially responsible if it is lost or broken?

Most of the time, that just means being careful and using common sense. But some old habits can lead to trouble, like leaving unused equipment in the hall with a label marked "Surplus". It must be properly decommissioned. Your APO will make sure that happens.

Lost, stolen, or damaged? The headlines make anyone with a laptop nervous with something like "a lost government computer puts millions of citizens at risk!" The best defense is vigilance, but if it happens please inform your APO immediately so he or she can begin the Department's security procedures that can increase the chances of recovery. This is not a suggestion—it is a requirement.

QUESTIONS? Contact Us - If you have questions or concerns relating to your responsibilities you can direct them to:

Mary Conner, telephone: 816-926-6822 and email: <mailto:mary.conner@kcc.usda.gov>, or

Ray Moreno, telephone: 970-295-5364 and email: <mailto:ray.moreno@ftc.usda.gov>.

For more information you can also visit USDA's website at: <http://www.usda.gov/da/property/agpmm.pdf> and scroll to: Agriculture Property Management Regulations (AGPMR) 104-50.107.

What is GOVERNMENT PERSONAL PROPERTY? This term includes IT equipment, furniture, office supplies, etc. in your custody or control. When it comes to government owned property you are responsible for:

- Proper use of government property.
- Safeguarding and protecting government property.
- Reporting incidences of misused/inappropriate use of government property to your supervisor.
- Reporting government property that is lost, stolen, damaged or destroyed to your supervisor/Accountable Property Officer (APO).
Note: APOs are the Group Managers and Branch Chiefs who have personal property under their control.
- Reporting government property that is no longer needed to your supervisor/APO.