OCFO OCIO *connections*

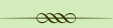## Contents

OCFO / OCIO Calendar

August – September 2009

Labor Day	9/7
Grandparents Day	9/13
Autumn Begins	9/22

Federal Relay in USDA

by Don Risden

What is the Federal Relay Service and how does it affect the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)? The Federal Relay Service provides reasonable accommodations for those individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and/or have speech disabilities, including Federal employees, for communications with and within the Federal government. Most of these services are available to USDA employees and customers. The Federal Relay Service has been provided by SPRINT since 1993 through the GSA centralized billing process. The charge for this service was passed along at a rate of roughly 1.5 percent on all FTS2001 (Federal Technology Service) billing charges.

The National Telecommunications Services and Operations (NTSO) Branch is taking the lead by managing the billing for this service to all USDA agencies and their employees. The Telecommunications Operations Management (TOM) group, within NTSO, realizes a savings for the Department of an estimated $500,000 per year. This is a result of the direct bill of an estimated $350,000 per year, based on usage, being paid by NTSO and distributed through Green Book charges back to the agencies.

This change in billing should not affect current users of Federal Relay or the services that are being used. These services are available in two forms: telephonically-based and Internet-based. Telephonically-based forms include TTY (Text Telephone)/ASCII/Voice, STS (Speech to Speech) and CAP TEL (Captioned Telephone). Internet-based forms include VRS (Video Relay Service), IP Relay and RCC (Relay Conference Captioning). More information is available from a number of resources.

The USDA's TARGET center is a great resource for assistance with safe and equal access to electronic and information technology by assessing, educating, and advocating for the integration of assistive technology and worksite accommodations. The Target Center also offers Section 508 training to all customers, personal evaluations, and consultations for USDA employees and Federal partners. For more information, visit the Target Center Web site at: http://www.da.usda.gov/oo/target/index.html.

Another resource that is at your fingertips is the Federal Relay site at: http://federalrelay.us/. This site provides background information and links to all the needed Federal Relay services and the SPRINT contact information and phone numbers needed to use or order services. The Federal Relay contract is for the use of all Federal agencies, authorized Federal contractors, agency sponsored universities and laboratories; the general public to access Federal agencies; and when authorized by law or regulation, state, local, and tribal governments, and other organizations listed in GSA Order 4800.2E.

It is very important for us all to understand the availability of these resources, how to access them, and how to help others with their needs. The information tied to any of these services is considered Personally Identifiable Information and is not releasable, nor trackable by the vendor or the Department.

The TOM group is available to answer any questions in regard to the services offered by the Federal Relay contract at (970) 295-5255. A list of resources and contacts will be established on our Web site to assist our customers and their associates.

CIO Chris Smith Creates Blog Site

In order to align with the current Administration's vision of transparency to the American public, I created a blog to begin a two-way dialogue with employees, constituents, and customers. The blog was designed by Andy Campbell, National Information Technology Center's (NITC) Web 2.0 Team Lead (located in Fort Collins, Colorado), with assistance from other members of the NITC staff. It is hosted by NITC in Kansas City. The blog will be moderated by me, members of the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) Program Management Office, and members of the NITC Software Development Team. Several reasons for starting this project are shared in my first blog as well as below:

⌾ **Why Blog?** By leveraging Web 2.0 Technology, the OCIO's goal is to reach out to employees and constituents, provide them news and updates as to what is going on in their government, and allow them to reach back out and provide open and honest feedback. I look to this forum to become a means to provide communications in both directions so that we may take feedback and ideas and use them to provide a more robust CIO shop as well as expanding the possibilities of ventures that provide a streamlined and well-run USDA.

⌾ **From us...** You can expect an open forum where we will provide updates and answers to the questions and comments that you post. When possible, we will upload information to the site to keep you informed of activities occurring here at the OCIO.

⌾ **From you...** We would like constructive questions, thoughts, and ideas to help us grow as a team.

A link to the blog can be found on the USDA OCIO Web site www.ocio.usda.gov. I invite you to visit the page and leave questions and/or comments.

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Valarie Burks, ACIO for Cyber and Privacy Policy and Oversight. In May 2009, Valarie Burks was appointed Associate Chief Information Officer for Cyber and Privacy Policy and Oversight (CPPO). Prior to this appointment, Valarie served as Director of the Washington Communications and Technology Services Division following her service as Director for the Universal Telecommunications Network (UTN) project.

CPPO's overall goal is to improve information security at USDA. We are striving to leverage best practices in security management to innovate the delivery of cyber security services to better protect USDA's digital and information assets. CPPO strives to continuously align our program to better protect the information technology services supporting our customers, internal and external to USDA," Valarie said. "My goal is to refine security related policies and services to establish enterprise resilience, a new strategic direction to effectively manage, mitigate, and minimize risks to USDA's information technology (IT) infrastructure."

Valarie began her federal career with the Government Accountability Office (GAO) as a computer scientist/auditor. She later served as the Network Operations Manager of GAO's local and wide area network project that was rolled out to more than five thousand staff members. She also has private sector experience as an IT Group Manager with the OAO Corporation, an IT firm.
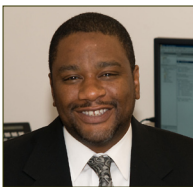
Michael McGuire, WCTS Director. On June 22, 2009, Michael "Mike" McGuire joined the International Technology Services (ITS) to serve as the Director of the Washington Communications and Technology Services (WCTS) Division. Mike comes to ITS from Rural Development (RD) where he served as Customer Service Director under the Office of the Chief Information Officer. In that position and other experiences, Mike has a well developed special customer perspective that will serve him and this organization well as we seek to provide top-notch customer service to all.

Prior to joining RD, Mike served at the U.S. General Services Administration as the Infrastructure Director of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer. He was instrumental in creating a managed IT enterprise solution to service several organizations that replaced legacy disjointed IT silos, saving the federal government millions of dollars in staffing and technology costs. Mike has extensive experience managing large projects and IT solutions for both the Federal government and private sector. Additionally, he served 10 years in the U.S. Army Information Systems Command.

Historically, WCTS has been treated as a separate entity because their primary responsibility is providing executive services to Whitten Building VIPs. When asked how he views WCTS' role, Mike said, "Our service for the Whitten Building VIPs is unique... but our agency mission is aligned with that of ITS. I believe we can leverage the strengths of both our groups in a unified way." The key is to have the same infrastructure and technical support resources available to all customer agencies. "Customers are our greatest asset; without them, we don't exist," he emphasizes. "Everybody is a VIP. In terms of uptime and reliability, we should provide the same levels of service quality across the board."

Managing Geospatial Information through Enterprise Data Centers

by Leah Krynicky

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is adopting an effective and efficient data, applications, and infrastructure management approach through Enterprise Data Centers (EDC). EDCs maintain program area information technology (IT) solutions and guarantee availability, interoperability, and security as an enterprise hosted resource rather than at the agency level, creating economies of scale, saving time and money, and increasing security strength. Much progress has already been made toward the goal of incrementally transferring the Department's systems and data from numerous, fragmented agency network hosting locations to four USDA EDCs managed by the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO).

USDA agencies also own geospatial data that consumes enormous space and significant bandwidth. As agencies are prepared for the transition, they are moving their geospatial data into the EDC environment. Through this transition, USDA will realize improvements in its ability to gather, transform, and share geospatial data. Moreover, Geographic Information Systems and other Geospatial applications are provisioned on a joint infrastructure. Agencies use geospatial data to achieve their missions, including soil conservation, fighting wild land fires, and promoting better farming practices. Rapidly evolving geospatial technology allows program mission data to be combined and analyzed to provide more complex views of operations and sustainable solutions.

OCIO is taking a leadership role to build USDA-wide geo-enabled solution capacity. Currently, network configurations, security concerns, limited resources, and restrictive policies limit agencies' ability to share valuable geospatial information within USDA and with external customer and stakeholder organizations. Storing all USDA geospatial datasets in a consistent managed service location through the EDCs avoids sub-optimized approaches with enhanced data quality, improved IT program management, a more robust data management life cycle, and better service to USDA constituents.

Stephen Lowe,
ACIO for TPA&E

In order for USDA to experience the full benefits of the Geospatial EDC, Stephen Lowe (Senior Agency Official for Geographic Information) is working with agency stakeholders to develop a Center of Excellence business model. This best practice approach is supported by a new Program Management Office to ensure our expertise is leveraged and knowledge is utilized when addressing complex business issues. Mr. Lowe's role on the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) also provides insights into Administration priorities so as to position USDA to offer innovative, well provisioned, and relevant Geographic Information System (GIS) and geospatial solutions This transition relies on the vision and leadership of Technology, Planning, Architecture, and E-Government (TPA&E), and coordinated resources of the National Information and Technology Center (NITC).

To learn more about USDA's geospatial activities, see www.ocio.usda.gov/geospatial. If you would like to be added to the USDA geospatial community, please contact: Dennis Crow, USDA Geospatial Projects Manager (Dennis.Crow2@usda.gov).

ITS CUSTOMER SERVICE ALERT

SCOTT SNOVER, DIRECTOR
INFRASTRUCTURE DEFINITION DIVISION

Over the next 2 months, the International Technology Services (ITS) will migrate employees of the Service Center Agencies to the *U.S. Department of Agriculture Enterprise Messaging System*. Users will not see any difference in the operation of their e-mail and will not have to change anything on their computers to complete the migration. Users will have access to more features, including Instant Messaging and Live Meeting services which will support improved collaboration for ITS customers. Information on these additional features will be provided after the migration has been completed.

ACTION REQUESTED: In preparation for this migration, all users are asked to review the messages in their Inbox and to delete or archive any messages that they will not need immediate access to over the next 2 months. This will help to minimize the workload necessary to complete the migration of each mailbox to the new system.

To help ensure a smooth transition to the new mail service, users are asked to close Outlook and log out of your workstation before leaving for the day. Doing so will ensure that all programs are closed properly and all data or documents are saved.

Please contact your local ITS support staff for assistance, if you have any e-mail problems during the migration.

Tuition Free Training Options for ITS Employees

Through the Microsoft Volume License Services, International Technology Services (ITS) employees are eligible for tuition free technical training courses provided by Microsoft or Microsoft Certified vendors. These software assurance benefits offer a broad range of options in one program, combining resources to help employees deploy, manage, and migrate software. The benefits include two types of tuition free training options:

1. E-Learning, offering self-paced interactive training designed for end-users and information technology (IT) professionals, and

2. Training Vouchers, providing in-depth technical classroom training for IT professionals and developers.

The E-Learning option is available to all ITS employees and employees in the Service Center Agencies (Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Rural Development) while the Training Voucher option is available to ITS employees only with the approval of the supervisor.

This fiscal year, Microsoft provided ITS with 492 eligible days for training and employees have taken advantage of this training opportunity. To date, only 173 eligible days remain for tuition-free Microsoft training.

For more information on getting access to the E-Learning courses and/or the Microsoft Training Vouchers, please contact Zina Sutch, 202-720-2574, ITS Organizational Development Branch.

Contingency Planning Points to Remember!

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides critical business and information technology (IT) services to a wide variety of stakeholders in diverse environments subject to frequent change. To be effective in an emergency, IT contingency plans must reflect their related business processes or IT systems accurately and completely. Because processes and systems may change frequently, USDA contingency planners must periodically review and revise their IT contingency plans (at least annually) to identify and account for new information.

The IT contingency plan is a vehicle designated by National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to ensure that IT assets will be able to support business functions during emergencies. Maintaining the IT contingency plan in the system accreditation process:

- Ensures compliance with NIST requirements;
- Avoids confusion and duplication with other emergency preparedness document requirements;
- Ensures there is one "go to" document during emergencies;
- Streamlines the accreditation process; and
- Reduces concurrency issues.

IT contingency plans provide recovery and resumption procedures for IT systems. They are broader in scope than disaster recovery plans (DRPs) because they include procedures for recovering systems resulting from minor disruptions that do not require relocation to alternate sites. DRPs, on the other hand, provide detailed procedures to facilitate recovery of capabilities at alternate sites. Developing, testing, and maintaining a detailed IT contingency plan increases the likelihood that the plan will be understood, utilized, and able to support business functions during emergencies. In addition, contingency planners must consider the following when working on contingency plans and incorporate them into contingency plans for General Support Systems (GSS) and Major Applications (MA):

- Agencies should develop contingency plans to cover all of their GSS and MA.
- The contingency plan should provide guidance and detailed recovery procedures to information system support personnel in case of an emergency or disaster. During an emergency, however, personnel safety must be the primary goal.
- Contingency plans must be tested on a regular basis to confirm the accuracy of individual recovery procedures and overall efficiency of the plan.
- Different levels of testing (i.e., table top, scenario based, full relocation) are required to ensure all aspects of the plan are viable.
- Training for personnel with contingency plan responsibilities should complement testing. Training must be conducted at least annually.
- Interdependent systems must be considered in planning activities. When planning an application recovery, ensure that the hosting GSS and any data feed systems are recovered concurrently.

Additional information, templates, samples and checklists for IT contingency planning are provided at http://www.ocionet.usda.gov/ocio/security/cpdr.html to help USDA meet requirements for IT contingency planning/testing and disaster recovery.

OCFO-New Orleans Goes Lean   by Patrice Kunzli and Michelle Bergeron

In 2007, OCFO-New Orleans began to take a closer look at its business processes and potential for improvement. As a result, the organization invested in the continuous improvement methodology called Lean Six Sigma (LSS) which provides a strategic method of reviewing business processes to identify cost reduction projects. OCFO-New Orleans began making immediate strides to implement this initiative. All employees were educated on LSS's structure, methods, and techniques, and key staff members were selected to attend training and acquire LSS certification. Several of those staff members completed projects that resulted in the award of either a black belt or green belt certification. The black belt certification is the highest certification available under LSS. These certifications will assist them in their ability to guide OCFO-New Orleans toward creating a more effective and efficient organization.

On May 13, 2009, an LSS Belt Certification Awards Ceremony was held at the National Finance Center (NFC) in New Orleans. Many OCFO-New Orleans employees, along with John Brewer, Associate Chief Financial Officer for Financial Operations (ACFO-FO), were recognized as they received their black or green belt certifications for USDA's LSS initiative. John White, NFC's Deputy Director, served as Master of Ceremonies. Assisting with award presentations were Jon Holladay, Acting Chief Financial Officer; Michael Clanton, Associate Chief Financial Officer for Financial Systems Planning and Management (ACFO FSPM); and Charles "Chuck" Wallace, Director, Controller Operations Division (COD). Also present to explain the LSS process was Phil Lardiere, President of Pendleton Group, Inc., the consultant which provided the training to USDA and determines if completed projects meet the requirements for a black or green belt certification.

LSS BLACK BELT CERTIFICATION RECIPIENT AND TEAM MEMBERS

- Kim Montz of ACFO-FSPM, for the Central Processing Unit Cost Reduction Project
   Team Members: Bill Kihneman, Debbie VanArsdale, Alicia Bragg, David Gonzalez, and Linda Peyton.

LSS GREEN BELT CERTIFICATION RECIPIENTS AND TEAM MEMBERS

- Chuck Wallace, Alva Chase, Peggy Javery, and Gerry Knepp of COD, for the Telephone and Utility Vendors System Project
- John White, Michael Zeringue, Gail Alonzo-Shorts, and Pamela Lincoln of NFC, for the Streamline Security Access Processing Project
- Kirt Ulfers, Cheryl Kaba, and Shelda Melancon of COD, for the Vendor Maintenance Project
   Team Member: Yolanda Wallace
- Eddie Reso of COD for the GSA Voluntary Collection Process Project
   Team Members: Frank Coolidge, Eddie Malter, and Robert Sturgis
- John Brewer of ACFO-FO, and Joe Giorlando and Ella Robertson of COD for the Unmatched Payroll Project

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

- Ella Robertson received a "special recognition award" from Jon Holladay for her in-depth analysis of financial transactions.

In addition to assisting with award presentations, Mr. Holladay took a few moments to discuss his long history with the OCFO staff in New Orleans, their bright future, and new business opportunities. He also expressed his excitement over other recent announcements: 1) the selection of COD's Administrative Payments Branch as the Most Efficient Organization under OMB Circular A-76 Performance of Commercial Activities, to provide utility and telecommunications invoice processing, and 2) NFC's selection as the host site for the FMMI Data Center Services. All in all, it was truly an exciting day for OCFO-New Orleans. For more information on the Lean Six Sigma Process and the Pendleton Group, Inc. visit: http://www.pendletongrp.com/index.html.

From left to right: Kim Montz, Jon Holladay, Bill Kihneman, Alicia Bragg, Debbie VanArsdale, David Gonzalez, Michael Clanton, and Linda Peyton.

Left to right: Jon Holladay, Ella Robertson, and Phil Lardiere.

Wallace Fondly Recalls D.C. Experience
by Stewart Small

Mr. Wallace goes to Washington – and comes back richer for the experience. Acting Associate Chief Financial Officer for Financial Policy and Planning (FPP) Charles "Chuck" Wallace completed a 5-month detail at the Washington, D.C., headquarters of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) this past May. FPP directs the development and implementation of financial policy for USDA.

In his normal duties, Wallace serves as the Director of the Controller Operations Division (COD) in New Orleans. COD oversees all financial reporting and financial management operations. Wallace called his detail very valuable for both Washington, D.C., and New Orleans. "It was wonderful to be exposed to the D.C. experience," he said. "Being there allowed me to see the demands that FPP must fulfill. Meantime, I was able to bring in an outsider's point of view on how their work impacts us. There was a very good idea sharing here which, in turn, created a better understanding of how each of our divisions operates, the challenges we both face and how we impact each other. So, it was a real win-win situation."

Wallace adds that, while he really enjoyed D.C., he's also really happy to get back to New Orleans. The OCIO/OCFO Connections team thanks him for his contributions to the Washington, D.C., office and wishes him all the best.

Ardell Beier Joins ESB
by Nancy Palmer

Ardell Beier has joined the OCIO, Administrative Management Division, Employee Services Branch (ESB) as a Management Analyst. ESB is the liaison with the International Technology Services'(ITS) human resources provider, the Bureau of the Public Debt (BPD). In addition to working with BPD, Ardell will be advising ITS employees and supervisors on policy issues concerning performance management, awards, safety, workplace violence, employee relations, reasonable accommodation, and other human resources topics.

Ardell has been in public service for more than 30 years. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Management. Prior to her new position in ESB, Ardell worked for the ITS Technical Support Division (TSD) as the Group Manager for Idaho and Oregon for approximately 3 years. She served as a first-line supervisor overseeing the work of information technology specialists as they carried out information technology operational functions and programs.

The majority of Ardell's career has been with USDA. Prior to ITS, Ardell worked for Rural Development (RD) as the Administrative Programs Director in Washington State. She has also worked for RD in Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and Arizona as an Information Resource Manager, Program Analyst, and other field office technical positions. Ardell's administrative programs, human resources, and hands-on supervision experience, along with her TSD perspective, will be a great asset to the supervisors and employees of ITS.

Staff Recognition

☆ 2009 Length of Service Recipients ☆

40 Years - Carol Henson

35 Years - Stephanie Dareing, Jackie Friend, Linda Hennessy, Gary Heritage, Linda Jones, Jere Lading

30 Years - Ronald Albritton, Robert Briczinski, Michael Burger, Doloros Clemon, John Crumb, Brenda Dawson, Elizabeth Earman, Robert Faulkner, James Kelly, Ronnie Jones, Terry McBride, Mary Powell, Susan Swanner, John Walter, Willie Williams

25 Years - Regina Allen, LaWanda Burnette, Sharon Craft, Eva Dear, Bryan Dixon, Steven Dorsey, Kelvin Fairfax, Robert Fryer, Janice Gardner, Charles Gowans, Jenese Hankins, Gary Hunsley, David Ireland, Laura O'Reilly, Crystal Wallace, Janice Warren

20 Years - Merna Appleton, Michelle Carlson, Richard Dougherty, Eleanora Fleetwood, Daniel Loredo, Dina McCarty, Carlos Metaxas, Jr., Alexander Pyle, James Steven, Brenda Thoele, James Thurman, John Velasquez, Angelo Rhodes, Toni Warren, Jack Zechman

15 Years - Sam Liu

10 Years - Holly Beckstrom-Dokter, Michele Bliven, Russell Dobbins, William Harbin, Emma Johnson, George Lovelace, Matthew Mason, Bruce Pacot, Cornell Perry, Andrew Rubio, Curt Sorensen

 5 Years - Aaron Baalman, Brian Fields, Eun Hwang, Jordan Jones, Philip Lewis, Edward Reyelts

☆ Recent Promotions ☆

Deatrice Degruy Aguillard, OCFO	Karen Frederickson, OCFO	Rhonda Miller, OCFO
Jessie Anderson, OCFO	William Harbin, OCIO/NITC	Bert Noel, OCIO/NITC
Demetria Bateman, OCFO	Cody Heermann, TSD-SD	Tammy Ogle, TSD-GA/SC
Annette Broussard, OCFO	Francis Henry, OCFO	Sheryl Quetant, OCFO
Robert Busby, TSD-AZ/NM	Linda Hood, TSD-AZ/NM	Rickey Smith, OCIO/NITC
Kevin Cooper, OCFO	Mary Howell, TSD-MT/WY	Linda Spence, TSD/LO-KC
Sharon Craft, OCIO/NITC	Marie Lamia, OCFO	Joe Trotter, OCIO/NTSO
Terre Duffy, OCFO	Susan Langbecker, TSD-AZ/NM	Ginger Weaver, OCIO/NITC
Wade Edwards, OCFO	Vincent Lopez, OCFO	Meria Whitedove, OCIO/NTSO
	Karen Miller, OCIO/NITC	

☆ Recent Hires ☆

Shannon Blue, OCFO	Frank Hoeppel, IOD/IDB	Jill McFarland, ACIO/FO
Colon Bowden III, TSD-LA	David Hurst, TSD/LO-CO/NC/NE/OR/TX/UT	Michael McGuire, WCTS/Director
George Costantino, TPA&E/CPD	Aron Johnson, IOD/HOB	Elizabeth McKenna, OCIO/NITC
Antoinetta Grant, TPA&E/CPD	Jordan Jones, OCIO/NITC	Timothy Miles, TSD-MT/WY
Sheila Hagemeister, TSD-MT/WY	Michael Littlejohn, OCIO/NITC	Timothy Steen, OCIO/NITC
John Heckler II, TSD-AR	Shawn Kuntz, TSD-MO	Kurt Tometich, OCIO/NITC
	Christopher Lowe, OCIO	

☆ Retirements ☆

John Flores, OCIO/NITC	Terry McBride, OCIO/NITC	Dean Olson, TSD-MO
Jackie Friend, OCIO/NITC		Thomas Pool, OCIO/NITC
Judy Hill, TSD-OH		Nancy Woolworth, OCIO/NITC

HOW OCFO AND OCIO CONNECT TO SUPPORT USDA INITIATIVES

Connections Communications Team
Sheila W. Greene, Editor-in-Chief
Steve Spector, Communications Analyst/L-3

Points of Contact
To e-mail a POC, just click on his or her name.

OCFO

Front Office / Financial Policy & Planning - Stewart Small

Financial Operations - Patrice Kunzli

Financial Systems - Ann Adam

National Finance Center - Michelle Bergeron

OCIO

Front Office - Judy Chamberlain

Technology Planning, Architecture & eGov - Leah Krynicky

Cyber Security - Evelyn Davis

National Information Technology Center - Bruce A. Pacot

National Telecommunications Services & Operations
Bob Fryer

Washington Communications and Technology Services
Seretta Stephens

"Day of Caring"
by Ruth Bennett and Bruce Pacot

The "Day of Caring" is a community service project for several government entities and private organizations. More than 3,000 volunteers dedicated a day to assist the less fortunate or non-profit organizations in the greater Kansas City metro area. This is the 15th Annual "Day of Caring" sponsored by the Combined Federal Campaign program. In 2009 and recent past years, the National Information Technology Center (NITC) participated with several personnel and family members to support various projects. This year the NITC supported two projects.

On June 6, 2009, NITC employees and family members worked at the Community Living Opportunities (CLO) Family Teaching Model home. The CLO's mission is to help adults and children with severe developmental disabilities achieve personally satisfying and fulfilling lifestyles in the community. They provide a vast array of services and support to more than 300 people. The volunteers cleaned up several outside areas, put up two flag poles, and planted a butterfly garden which included laying pavers. The coordinators for the CLO event were Ruth Bennett and Sandra Burbank.

The other NITC volunteer effort supported the Heart of America STAND DOWN program which has given a "hand up" to Kansas City's homeless veterans since 1993. The mission of the Program is "to provide homeless veterans with access to some of the short and long-term resources necessary to begin rebuilding their lives" in the community. There are more than 1,800 homeless veterans and family members in the Kansas City area on any given night. This event required setup on June 3rd and the veteran's and family members were able to receive support services on June 5th and 6th in downtown Kansas City, Missouri. The services provided were: legal, health and medical, Veterans Administration Benefits, counseling, identification cards, Internal Revenue Service, educational and vocational, Social Security Administration, clothing distribution, meals, hygiene facilities, and others. There were 811 veterans and family members who attended the Program to receive the services provided. There were 705 volunteers throughout the community who supported this special community event.

The NITC collected clothing and toiletry donations at the Ward Parkway Building and other government entities had special events as well. We believe that those who served our country honorably should not be forgotten! Bruce Pacot was the coordinator for the NITC facility support effort.