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UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
BRIEFING ON HUMAN CAPITAL AND
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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THURSDAY

April 16, 2009

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The Commission convened at 1:30 p.m., the Honorable Dale E. Klein, Chairman
presiding.

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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3 Preparedness Programs, EDO

4 JAMES McDERMOTT, Director, Office of Human Resources

5 MIRIAM COHEN, Deputy Director, Office of Human Resources

6 JAMES HORN, Chief, Program Management, Policy Development

7 and Analysis Staff

8 JAMES MORRIS, Deputy Associate Director, Professional

9 Development Center

10 JERI BUCHHOLZ, Associate Director, Human Resources

11 Operations and Policy

12 CORENTHIS KELLEY, Director, Office of Small Business and Civil

13 Rights

14 DALE YEILDING, President of the local National Treasury

15 Employees Union

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: Good afternoon. This is always a fun and
3 exciting program to hear about. We heard yesterday about our corporate support
4 and now today we get to hear about what the corporate support supports and that
5 is the people, our most valuable asset.

6 The thing that I noticed in looking at the attendance working in HR, I was
7 wondering Jim do you have a preference for people that start with Jim as their
8 name because we've got three Jims and a Jeri and a Miriam and a Ren. So, it
9 seems like "Js" were the popular requirement.

10 MR. McDERMOTT: "J" is fine. Miriam is an outlier.

11 [LAUGHTER]

12 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: Well, we look forward to hearing about our most
13 important asset; that's how do we hire, train and retain. So, I look forward to
14 hearing about these programs. Bruce, do you want to begin?

15 MR. MALLETT: Thank you very much, Chairman Klein. Good
16 afternoon and good afternoon to Commissioners Jaczko, Lyons and Svinicki.

17 Thank you for the opportunity again to discuss our accomplishments,
18 challenges and focus areas and two key portions of our programs in the agency.
19 One of those is human capital investment and another one is equal employment
20 opportunity and diversity management.

21 Slide 2 -- if I could have that please -- lists the topics that are on the agenda
22 that will be discussed by the able individuals at the table today.

1 As usual, I have a few opening remarks that Bill Borchardt and I would like
2 to make. First of all, as you said Chairman Klein employees are our most
3 important asset and as such we believe it's very important to continue to be
4 pro-active in our recruiting and our retaining of those employees and that we
5 maintain the skills in our inventory in all disciplines in the agency.

6 Six keys to success of that as we look to the future are these, I believe.
7 One is that we provide these employees with the best working conditions we can
8 and that can include work life balance, it can include tools they need to do their
9 job, the environment, the work environment they are in. It can be development
10 and training and we're going to talk of some of those subjects today.

11 Second item I think key to success is that we aggressively pursue an
12 environment where every employee feels free to raise issues, whether those
13 issues are they don't like their chair or they don't like some decision we made.
14 And that we also believe that we should foster that environment and foster
15 diversity and make sure that it's understood.

16 I would highlight the third item; a key to success is targeted recruiting. As
17 we now are at a point in the agency where we're not growing as fast as we have
18 been in the last couple of years it's important that we target our recruiting to those
19 selected skills that we believe we definitely need in the agency to maintain that
20 inventory.

21 The fourth area key to success that we believe is the training now must be
22 a balanced approach. In the past we have focused on qualifications of individuals

1 for positions. Now by balance we mean that we have to balance between
2 qualifications and also teaching people to be a regulator. As Jim will talk about,
3 we have a very large percentage of our staff that are early in their careers with the
4 agency.

5 We also think that we have to have training across all positions and all
6 levels of the agency now. And, of course, you've heard from Marty Virgilio and
7 others that we have to balance knowledge transfer now in our training program as
8 well as basic qualifications.

9 The fifth key to success we believe is to emphasize our core values. As
10 you know Bill Borchardt has been emphasizing that for the last few months and we
11 believe it's very important as an organization to do that as we look forward.

12 And the last key to success we believe is we've got to continue to review
13 and obtain feedback from the employees as to what they would like to change.
14 And, of course, we have the Office of Inspector General Survey coming up here in
15 the May timeframe. And we do use that feedback and you'll hear some of that
16 from the speakers here today as well.

17 I would conclude with we're extremely proud of the work that we have done
18 and the accomplishments and I think these help us become the best place to work
19 in the Federal agencies.

20 And with that I'll turn it over to Jim McDermott.

21 MR. McDERMOTT: Thank you Bruce and good afternoon

22 Mr. Chairman, Commissioners. Show me -- back up one to the agenda, please on

1 the slides. Ah, don't like to back up. There it is.

2 I'm going to be quick on the state of human capital and talk about a couple
3 of key things in recruitment and retention as well as a picture of what the staff
4 looks like. Following me, Miriam is going to talk about work life, a key piece of our
5 best places to work posture.

6 After that, Jim Horn on my far right over here, he does our survey stuff and
7 he's going to do some highlights from the Federal Human Capital Survey. Jim
8 Morris -- another Jim -- is going to do the piece on training and what are the key
9 things challenging us in training.

10 And finally, Jeri Buchholz our relatively new Associate Director for Policy
11 and Operations is going to give you a glimpse of the future.

12 And there's another name I'd like to mention. In the audience today is Jodie
13 Hudson who will become our Chief Learning Officer in a few weeks. Jodie, would
14 you stand up? Welcome. All right. Next slide, please. Not that one; that's just
15 me. Next slide. There we go.

16 This is stuff you already know. This is the -- just charts the staff growth
17 since 2003, which has been significant. Over the last five years it's been 2,000
18 new people in an agency now of 4,000. So, it's half the staff that's been here a
19 little over five years. This is not to be belabored, but that's our challenge to absorb
20 all these people and get on with it. If I could have the next slide.

21 This is Commissioner McGaffigan's memorial tsunami chart. It keeps
22 getting more and more interesting. The average age of the staff has declined

1 slightly from 47.9 four years ago to 46.7 today and that's despite a notable lack of
2 support from the staff which persists in getting older as they're here.

3 [LAUGHTER]

4 Now, part of this shift to a younger thing is offset by the fact that in the last
5 strong surge, the thousand or so people we hired just in the last three years, more
6 than half of them -- not much, but slightly more than half of them are over the age
7 of 40. So, we're replenishing the staff across the wide spectrum of age groups.

8 In the background book we gave you, you would see that we have a fair
9 number of employees age 60 and above. I think the percentage is pretty high.
10 That's actually good news.

11 We are we hiring a lot of people for the future, the long-term future, and
12 we're also hiring a lot of people maybe for a shorter term future, but they bring
13 skills and gifts into the workplace that we can really use. Next slide, please.

14 Hiring and recruitment. Just a few highlights. The most important one is
15 the first one, but that's always nebulous: planning ahead. We plan to use our
16 hiring opportunities not just to replace, but to sort of retool or reshape the work
17 force.

18 The question of course, is what are we reshaping it for? That will change
19 over time. The way we go about that is we get management, the senior managers
20 always refreshing what they believe are there critical skill needs. And those, of
21 course, drive our recruitment activities.

22 Part of that is informed by the views of the Human Capital Council, which is

1 a group of the Office Deputy Directors, who exchange views about what they need
2 and what they have. There can be some shifts back and forth between
3 organizations as a result of their deliberations.

4 We have a planning tool that supports this, our strategic work force
5 planning tool, but quite honestly we need better work force analytics. We gave
6 you that mound of data in the book. We don't connect as many of the dots as we
7 could in that data to say this is what these various -- this is what our attrition
8 means in terms of critical skills and this is what our age profile means in terms of
9 anticipated losses and all that.

10 We want to refine that process and do better strategic work force planning.
11 For example, let me be parochial. In my own office I have got to think about what
12 do I really want to staff for long-term and what pieces of our business should be
13 outsourced?

14 Some of it is already outsourced to the National Business Center in Denver
15 and we need to pursue that. That blended work force is something we're going to
16 have to have and it applies to HR, but it applies across the board in the agency.

17 More focused advertising just means that we are not sure we get enough
18 bang for our advertising buck. So, we're kind of trying to maybe spend a few less
19 bucks, but get it targeted by being more -- how should I say -- more agile and
20 putting the right ad out in the right place at the right time.

21 We're also thinking about being a little more selective in the number of
22 actual recruitment events we go to. I think that this year we're going to do about

1 71 events and I'm going to try to pare that list down to about 50 events in 2010
2 commensurate with the amount of recruiting we think we're going to be doing in
3 2010.

4 Some of that is to show the flag; some of it is to build on a presence to
5 make our presence known, make our name known around. Offsetting that will be
6 greater reliance on virtual career fairs. We dabbled in that and it's been very
7 successful. It is very efficient, very economical.

8 You arrange it ahead of time. The people come. They get interviewed and
9 all that and it's all done virtually. We have "invitationals" as we call them. Same
10 thing except they actually come to the building by invitation after we already know
11 pretty much what we're getting.

12 And we're also going to try and forge some stronger relationships by getting
13 out there for information sessions. I'm planning on doing those both ways. I'm
14 getting feelers from some of the schools that are receiving grants from us. They'd
15 be interested in shorter medium term service periods for their faculty here in the
16 agency and we think that that would promote -- nourish the relationship that's
17 already pretty good with these schools.

18 We're going to continue our emphasis on hiring from the various target
19 groups. That's going to be more of a challenge if we're hiring less. We're not
20 going to be able to do as well and we're particularly interested in a very hard area
21 to make progress in and that's hiring the disabled, particularly disabled veterans.

22 Finally, we've had good luck. I couldn't steal it because it's not from my

1 briefing, but there's a nice chart up in the EDO's office about how much
2 improvement we've made in the hiring process through the Lean Six Sigma
3 exercise that we went through. And we cut it better than in half some of the
4 phases of it. So, that's a good story. Next slide, please.

5 Attrition. The story is all in the projected bar for 2009. Retirements are
6 down, resignations are down, transfers are about the same because that's people
7 just moving within the government. Why is that? That's because of the economy
8 primarily.

9 The impact on 401(k)s and the thrift savings plans for employees has been
10 severe and so many of them have revised retirement plans and say, "You know, I
11 think I'm going to stay on a while." That maybe represents a personal sacrifice,
12 but it's a boon for the agency in the sense that many of these are our most
13 valuable people in terms of knowledge that they retain and still have time to
14 transfer and so forth.

15 We have not yet been hit by competition from the industry. We got a good
16 jump out ahead and that was great. When and where that will develop, I can't
17 predict right now. I don't see any signs of it yet.

18 On the other hand, you have a person on rotation to your office who's a
19 resident inspector, he's a senior resident. He told me, he says, "You know, I'm
20 getting calls all the time." So, a lot of that is going on. I can figure a way to
21 capture that data and maybe find out exactly how intense that traffic is. Next slide,
22 please.

1 Retention. The key thing is meaningful work that keeps employees
2 engaged. It's as simple as that. I won't belabor it, but that's what we need. We
3 find that our work life programs are a big draw. The flexible scheduling, the stuff
4 where you'll hear more about it from Miriam on NewFlex and stuff like that. That
5 just sells so well when we're out on the stump recruiting. And then once we get
6 people here it doesn't get any better. It's just fine.

7 I would say actually training and development is number two on the
8 retention list right after meaningful work. It's what gets people here and it keeps
9 them going. The Commission has been interested in our graduate program.
10 You'll hear about that a little later, too. And my mantra with a lot of the people that
11 are here says, "If you've got the time we've got the money."

12 We are supporting a lot of graduate education that is going on with people
13 doing it on their time and with us helping out with some lab fees and books and
14 tuition and stuff like that. That is a big win for the agency. And then they in turn
15 just bring it all home here and it stays here.

16 The use of incentives. You're familiar with that from the reports we give you
17 on use of the offset waiver. You have a paper up and it's talking a lot about what
18 can we do particularly about residents to retain people in the resident's program.
19 That's a work in progress that we're developing tools to see -- we're not too sure
20 exactly what would really work. I think it's more than money in terms of how we
21 deal with retaining not only residents, but the staff in general.

22 And I think that it's time for me to pass the baton now to Miriam who will talk

1 about work life.

2 MS. COHEN: Good afternoon, Chairman Klein, Commissioners.

3 One of the good things about talking about work life is that we're in an agency
4 where we want to continuously improve in work life, so we're starting from a
5 position of strength and that's a good place to be.

6 One of the things that the agency has been doing over the past year or so
7 is looking at ways to improve work life. There was a committee that was chaired
8 by Mike Weber from NMSS which had membership from a number of the offices to
9 look at how we can enhance the work life in the agency building upon the
10 strengths that we've had historically.

11 We looked at results from the Federal Human Capital Survey where people
12 talked about having flexible work schedules as something that would continue to
13 enhance their work life in the NRC.

14 As this group was in the process of being formed there was already good
15 work being done in the Office of New Reactors that had already begun some
16 efforts to look at having flexible work schedules in their office.

17 And in August of this year NRO initiated a pilot which has what they're
18 calling NewFlex, which is expanded work schedule hours, expanded use of credit
19 hours where appropriate and what we've done is in cooperation with CFO and with
20 NTEU we negotiated this NewFlex pilot program which has been in place since
21 August.

22 There's good and bad things about it. If you consider being able to start

1 your work at 5:00 a.m. and then ending at 11:00 p.m. you could consider that a
2 good thing. But one of the advantages of this new flexibility is that you could
3 feasibly have someone who could do some work in the office during the day,
4 maybe go home for a few hours and have some child care responsibilities if you
5 needed that and then actually pick up some work in the evening, and you could do
6 that work in the office or at home.

7 Recognizing that if you were working at home that would be part of the
8 Flexiplace arrangement that would have to be agreed to by your supervisor as
9 well.

10 We've seen in the past number of months that the people that are in the
11 pilot are pretty darn happy. I think NRO has about 50% of their office participating,
12 although the numbers I've seen recently said that there's actually more
13 participation than that.

14 As you would expect most of the participants in the pilot are very, very
15 happy. The supervisors are happy as well. We don't have any data yet to suggest
16 that productivity has increased or decreased, but we know that they're not seeing
17 a marked difference in the work that's being done.

18 So, I also think that over time you'll have to look to see at some trend data
19 because looking at the pilot after six months it's just that. It's a six month gauge of
20 where we are.

21 The pilot has been extended for up to a year and we're looking at ways that
22 we could potentially broaden this outside of the agency -- I'm sorry; outside of

1 NRO and offices that would be included potentially are the Office of International
2 Programs, obviously a Commission office. That would be very interesting to see
3 the dynamics of people on a NewFlex pilot working for the Commission as well as
4 Region I. Region I is also very interested in moving to the NewFlex pilot.

5 Again, it would give us the opportunity to look at the unique circumstances
6 that are posed by a Regional office and looking at the NewFlex kind of situation.

7 I think what we're looking for right now is some further coordination with
8 CFO to determine the timing for any changes to the payroll system to determine
9 whether or not when they can come on board with that.

10 Another important part of work life is telework. I think in the background
11 book that you've gotten there's some information on telework. And what we've
12 seen from '07 to '08 is that there's been an increase in the number of people that
13 are telecommuting three days a week, one to two days a week -- I'm sorry; during
14 the pay period as well as even one day a month.

15 And what we're seeing is that from '07 to '08 that more people are
16 understanding what's involved in telework. The managers are getting more
17 comfortable with telework. And if you look at some of the trend data from industry
18 it tells you that for this to be successful the managers really have to be trained in
19 understanding how to manage people that aren't in the office.

20 And I think also in the Federal sector we sometimes have managers that
21 have to be able to see you to know that you're actually working. Whether or not
22 you're actually being productive is another story, but I think that's all part of the

1 supervisory training and comfort level that goes along with telework.

2 I think the other interesting tidbit on telework as recently Tom Boyce
3 participated in a telework exchange which was an interview with some of the other
4 CIOs in the Federal sector that looked at what things could be done to enhance
5 the amount of telework in the Federal sector and the infrastructure was a big deal
6 and certainly IT capabilities are important as well.

7 So, I think as we look to expanding telework in the agency we have to make
8 sure that we have the ability to provide the infrastructure to make that program
9 successful.

10 In wrapping up I would say that the outreach and communication are
11 definitely key. We need to continue to outreach to both supervisors and
12 employees on the different benefits of the work life programs in the agency.

13 Some of you may recall about a year or so ago we had a Telework Day that
14 was out in the One White Flint atrium area where we had a lot of information about
15 what's involved in telework and what are the things that you need to do to be
16 successful to work under a telework arrangement.

17 We've also had a series of All Supervisors' Meetings over the course of the
18 past year. Back in September we hosted some conferences with supervisors to
19 answer any questions that they might have on how to successfully work under
20 telework.

21 We also are going to be having what I would call a best practices workshop
22 with some of the NRO supervisors, I believe next week, that's going to encourage

1 managers from throughout the agency to address questions to the supervisors
2 from NRO that are currently managing employees that are on these flexible work
3 schedules.

4 So, I think what we're going to try to do is really get the word out so that
5 should we pursue a more flexible work schedule agency wide that the supervisors
6 are equipped to deal with the changing work environment that they live in.

7 Finally, I think what we want to do is continue to share best practices across
8 the agency. We have a community of new supervisors that is very, very active at
9 meeting regularly to discuss issues, not only just on telework, but generally work
10 life programs.

11 We've only touched on a couple of them here this morning, but if you look
12 across the agency in terms of the Federal human capital results that Jim is going
13 to discuss with you we're in a real position of strength.

14 People come to the agency because it's the number one place to work.
15 They're getting meaningful work and we're also able to provide them important
16 benefits like the healthcare facilities, the wellness programs, the child care
17 subsidies. There's a lot of really good things that are going on in the agency and
18 we're just poised to continue that work so we can remain number one. Jim?

19 MR. HORN: Good afternoon, Chairman and Commissioners. I
20 wanted to go over briefly just the results of the annual capital survey -- Human
21 Capital Survey. Basically, this is a survey that's done by OPM every two years
22 and in the intervening years we run our own survey.

1 It's based on the human capital assessment and accountability framework
2 and what that does is that guides the government-wide efforts for the human
3 capital strategies.

4 As the first slide shows we were number one in three of the different areas:
5 leadership and knowledge management, talent management, job satisfaction.
6 And number two in results-oriented performance culture. Second slide, please.

7 In the second slide what I've done is I've highlighted the areas where the
8 results indicated that the employees felt things had improved the most. And in
9 leadership they indicate that they trust their supervisors and feel their supervisors
10 work well with them and with employees of different backgrounds.

11 In the learning and knowledge management they believe they have the
12 necessary skills to do the job.

13 And in job satisfaction they appeared to like the work they do and they feel
14 that they're very competent in doing it.

15 And two additional notes. The response rate for the 2008 survey was about
16 65%, which places us about 14% higher than the government average. And they
17 also did a comparison with private industry and in those 14 different areas the
18 NRC was higher than private industry in every one.

19 MR. MORRIS: Chairman Klein, Commissioners, good afternoon.
20 Next slide, please.

21 There's four areas in training and development that I think I'd like to
22 highlight for you. Our Learning Management System, which was implemented in

1 April of last year; our work that we're doing in the area of advanced training
2 methods; the development of the Leaders Academy; and the Graduate Education
3 Programs that are available within the agency.

4 Our Learning Management System as I mentioned was deployed in April
5 and we underestimated, I think, some of the technical and user challenges that we
6 would face with implementing an agency wide system such as that.

7 We, I think, overestimated the ability of the vendor and we didn't realize
8 how steep the learning curve might be for some of our users, but we're dealing
9 with that and we're going through a period of user education. We're finding the
10 user acceptance and use of the system and ease of use of the system is
11 increasing.

12 We're moving forward to enhance or to really capture some of the benefits
13 of the system that are available, which would include the ability to put in and define
14 curricula for individuals. So, instead of trying to have an individual come up with
15 each core set that they need for their qualification program their training
16 coordinator would be able to assign to them a list of all the courses and they could
17 go in and register to meet their schedule, which takes a lot of the administrative
18 burden off.

19 It's one of the things we hope to accomplish with this is to make the
20 registration and delivery and the recording of training much more effective and
21 much more efficient.

22 The other thing that we found that we had some issues with was the

1 integration of our online content. It turns out that a lot of the online e-Learning
2 courses that we had used historically had been written in different versions of
3 software. And when we tried to get them to run on the iLearn system it was
4 problematic.

5 So, we're going through a process now where we have over 20 programs
6 that we are basically re-wrapping so that we can deliver those through the iLearn
7 system and not have to record those things separately.

8 The delivery of -- next slide, please -- the delivery of e-Learning is one of
9 the advanced training methods that we're looking at and we're looking beyond
10 what we would call the page turners where you have some online content which
11 affectively you're reading on line.

12 We're trying to look forward to utilize new technologies and learning tools to
13 make our e-Learning, our advanced training more compelling and more effective.

14 There's a tremendous amount of potential to reducing the time to
15 competency by being able to provide learning to individuals on their desktop
16 just-in-time as they need it without them having to wait a period of time for the next
17 classroom offering.

18 There's also the concern that we have as staff members of maintaining the
19 quality and the value that's being delivered through the training. So, it's the
20 trade-off between shortening the time to competency and, of course, saving the
21 time particularly in travel now that really all of our training facilities are remote from
22 our operating facilities.

1 If we can take the learning to the users rather than transport the users to
2 the learning it's obviously much more cost-effective.

3 To examine this and to maintain balance we're in the process of doing an
4 e-Learning study, which is base lining our current e-Learning capabilities, but also
5 giving us a methodology to go forward to develop business cases to determine
6 which parts of our training, although not all of it, we may want to move into an
7 e-Learning environment where it will be effective, where it can be made to be
8 compelling and adaptive for the user, deliver the same learning quality, but at a
9 lower cost.

10 There are going to be other parts of our training such as our full-scale
11 simulator training that we conduct in Chattanooga which, of course, we feel will
12 probably have to continue to be delivered in that setting.

13 So, it's the blend of online training and advanced training methods and
14 traditional classroom training that we think will ultimately give us the best mix
15 going forward. So, we'll have some prototypes and we're going to make sure
16 through these prototypes that we'll be able to deliver this through our existing
17 infrastructure.

18 Another area that I think is of good interest is the Leaders Academy. The
19 Leaders Academy really refers not to a physical area or a particular set program,
20 but rather a framework for the development of leaders within the agency.

21 We've taken the approach of a leader at every level. And by that we mean
22 that in the past have not really met the needs in a lot of cases of leaders that do

1 not hold leadership positions; in other words, people that we have tasked and put
2 into leadership roles as team leaders or work group leaders who are not actually
3 supervisors or team leaders by appointment.

4 We find that what we're trying to do, the approach we want to take now,
5 what we want to try and accomplish is to provide them as they're identified to us
6 with some limited scope, but essential just-in-time training, which is going to give
7 them some better tools for leading their work groups or leading their task teams.

8 This, of course, will carry forward as they work into our other programs as
9 they're potentially selected into the Team Leader Development Program or the
10 Leadership Potential Program or appointed as a supervisor and go through the
11 supervisory development program. So, we're providing multiple paths into the
12 supervisory ranks and those will feed up into our senior executives and eventually
13 into our senior leaders.

14 As we move the agency forward we find that as we bring in individuals from
15 other Federal agencies or from industry that the needs, the learning needs of
16 these individuals are varied widely depending on the roles that they have played in
17 other agencies and how well those would align with the competencies that are
18 needed by leaders at NRC.

19 So, the Leadership Academy is going to provide us a more individualized
20 approach to leadership development through the leadership development plans.
21 In conjunction with this we're working with the Office of Small Business and Civil
22 Rights providing mentoring training and mentoring and mentor trainees at our

1 executive levels.

2 At the senior leadership levels we're looking at facilitating the use of
3 executive coaches. One of the ideas or concepts that we want to foster through
4 this is to implant in our leadership ranks the concept of lifelong learning or
5 continual development. We feel that that is an important concept for them to
6 embrace and to share with their staff. Next slide, please.

7 As part of this concept or this idea of lifelong learning we support graduate
8 education. We basically are looking at a two-pronged or two-phased approach.

9 One is through a full-time graduate fellowship program. In the graduate
10 fellowship program currently there are three participants, one who is waiting to
11 start their education, two that are pursuing doctoral degrees in the areas of Digital
12 I&C, a critical need for the agency. And that is the focus of this program is to
13 primarily look at doctoral work in areas that may be research intensive that meet
14 critical needs for the NRC.

15 We're going to begin expanding through the auspices of the Commission in
16 2010 the size of this program which we are currently piloting with the Office of
17 Regulatory Research and open this up to an agency wide program.

18 We feel that the best approach for this program since it is supposed to be
19 focused on the agency's most critical needs is to go forward and ask the offices to
20 basically develop case statements, telling us what is the position that they wish to
21 fund, why they feel it's most appropriate to do it through the graduate fellowship
22 program, when is the timing of the need. Is it immediate or is it projected? What

1 other opportunities or options would be available for them to find that expertise
2 and bring it into the agency?

3 And then we'll take these cases as a group to our senior leaders and ask
4 them to weigh them and to approve on an agency wide basis being able to
5 prioritize across all the program offices and regions at once to determine which of
6 these are most appropriate to be funded through or to be filled through the
7 graduate fellowship program.

8 Once they've made that determination the sponsoring office will actually
9 open up the vacancy announcement as a graduate fellow and anyone in the
10 agency would be eligible to apply for this.

11 We also don't want to lose sight of what would be our part-time graduate
12 education and that's the graduate education which is funded by the external
13 training funds of the offices and regions. They're able to look within their own to
14 find people that are willing to make the investment in part-time education, basically
15 night school, and to provide them on a course by course basis for those that align
16 with the agency's mission the ability to attend and to get a graduate or even a
17 baccalaureate degree.

18 In the past few years we've had more than 15 of our employees gain
19 baccalaureate degrees and more than 20 gain post-baccalaureate degrees.
20 These are funded through part-time education. Those are usually individuals that
21 are fairly highly motivated and driven to succeed. And it's nice to be able, as Jim
22 said, if they have the desire that you have the money for them. Thank you.

1 MR. McDERMOTT: Now it's Jeri.

2 MS. BUCHHOLZ: Good afternoon. As we look forward to the future
3 one of the greatest impacts going to affect the NRC work force are new and
4 emerging technologies. Many of these technologies will become available to us
5 through the Department of Interior's National Business Center. And we'll be
6 looking at implementing those largely web-based technologies as they become
7 available to us.

8 But the impact of technology on the work force will impact our overall
9 human capital program and as a result impact the Office of Human Resources.
10 So, we need to continually look at how we do our business in the Office of Human
11 Resources and how we modify our business processes because we have to
12 always remember that technology is just a tool that employees use to do their work
13 and to manage their careers.

14 I believe well into the future we will continue to update and modify our work
15 life programs so that we have one of the best work life programs in the federal
16 government. And we will continue our efforts to implement the e-Gov initiatives.

17 There are actually only 2 that are currently on the agenda left: EOPF, which
18 we will begin implementation of this year and Retirement Systems Modernization,
19 which OPM will deploy several fiscal years down the road because you must
20 deploy EOPF before you can deploy Retirement Systems Modernization.

21 As we look forward to the future --

22 COMMISSIONER JACZKO: I'm sorry; EOPF is?

1 MS. BUCHHOLZ: Electronic Official Personnel Folder.

2 COMMISSIONER JACZKO: Okay. Thanks.

3 MS. BUCHHOLZ: As we look forward to the future it can be very
4 difficult to envision how all of these changes in technology and processes impact
5 on the individual employees at the NRC and how employees will use these
6 different tools to manage their work and their careers.

7 We've started thinking ahead and looking at how that happens and one of
8 the tools that we use in HR is what we call "A Day in the Life Of". "A Day in the
9 Life Of" takes a snapshot of a moment in a person's life well into the future and
10 envisions how that new technology or that new business process might be used by
11 an individual employee at a particular moment in time.

12 We have prepared for you today "A Day in the Life Of" an employee, NRC
13 employee, 2015, which I would like to present to you now.

14 Willard Gibbs was sitting in the waiting area of the NRC Health Unit. He
15 had a few minutes before his appointment for his physical, so he popped open his
16 laptop and he logged into the NRC Knowledge Management Center to see if there
17 was any new information about the project he'd volunteered for.

18 He was excited because the topic was the same as his master's thesis at
19 Pitt and although the work was being done in a different office he was happy to
20 have the opportunity to participate in the project.

21 When he logged on a box popped up: Ethics Orientation for New NRC
22 Employees. This interactive online class is scheduled to start in 15 minutes.

1 Would you like to join? "Dang", he thought, "no time right now." He clicked
2 "please notify me when the next class is scheduled" and proceeded to the
3 Knowledge Management Center.

4 He made a note that a meeting had been scheduled tomorrow at 2:00 p.m.
5 and clicked "add this meeting to my calendar" just as the nurse called him for his
6 appointment.

7 After he'd finished up in the Health Unit he had about 15 minutes before his
8 branch staff meeting. He decided to swing by the work life and benefits branch in
9 HR.

10 Before arriving at the NRC he and his wife Sandy had gone through the
11 new employee orientation together. His wife had picked the health benefits
12 program they were interested in, but she had several questions about other
13 benefits that the NRC offered that may benefit their family.

14 They had enrolled their child in the NRC Child Care Center and signed up
15 for a flexible spending account for both healthcare and child care.

16 However, Sandy was planning to enter graduate school in the fall and was
17 interested in information about the student loan repayment program as well as any
18 other support the NRC might offer.

19 Willard also wanted to know about his retirement benefits for financial
20 planning purposes. Shortly after he came on board he noticed a "Your
21 Retirement" icon in his employee dashboard. Curious, he logged in and was
22 amazed to see that there were various retirement options calculated for him and

1 that his internship from the Department of Energy 10 years ago had caught up with
2 him and was included in his Electronic Official Personnel Folder.

3 As he walked down the hallway he noticed the plaques from the Partnership
4 for Public Service Best Places to Work: 2015, 2013, 2011, 2009, 2007.

5 [LAUGHTER]

6 He flashed back to the first time he had heard about the NRC sitting in the
7 auditorium at Pitt, a freshman geek majoring in nuclear engineering barely able to
8 imagine the future he was now living. As he punched the elevator button he
9 thought, "I'm one lucky guy."

10 So, we can see into the future that there will be continuing impact on the
11 work force in terms of implementing technology and how employees can use that
12 technology to engage with each other, manage their work and manage their
13 careers. That's our vision for the future.

14 MR. MALLETT: Thank you. Now, we want to turn it over to Ren
15 Kelley to talk about our outreach and compliance coordination program. Ren?

16 MS. KELLEY: Thank you so much, Bruce. Good afternoon,
17 Chairman Klein, Commissioners. As you know we had an opportunity to brief the
18 Commission on the full range of our programs in December. And given that I've
19 selected just one topic to give thumbnail information for this briefing and we
20 selected this topic because it's one that has kind of surged in the entire Federal
21 government in terms of emphasis within the last few months.

22 Our outreach and compliance program basically has to do with how NRC in

1 its work that it does and when it finances something, gives money to someone
2 else, how does the agency go about ensuring that no one -- that there's equal
3 access to the benefits from those funds or that the agency gives access to its own
4 work to those who have a need to know it's public as we do our business. Next
5 slide, please.

6 As I mentioned, we've had an increased emphasis in the compliance across
7 the Federal government for those regulations that don't necessarily have to do
8 with Federal employees. That would be under Title 7 of civil rights statutes, but
9 rather how the Federal government impacts external stakeholders, others who
10 receive the benefits from the work that the agencies do or from the monies that are
11 given to various recipients.

12 And with regard to compliance monitoring and evaluation there are a
13 number of oversight agencies across the Federal government depending on the
14 subject matter or the topic or the area that we're talking about. For instance, if
15 you're talking about disability that's the Department of Justice. If you're talking
16 about training, that's another agency. And, of course, you've got Congress and
17 the White House initiatives that we make reports to. So, there's quite a bit of an
18 external reporting requirement on the agency in this area.

19 Recently, we've had HHS that called a government-wide meeting to say
20 what are agencies doing in this area. So, we've provided information regarding
21 that.

22 As you know this program at NRC was stood up a little over a year ago.

1 And so, we were not at Ground Zero in any of this and the resources that we put
2 toward this area have really served the agency well.

3 So, we were able to provide information and we got a call from the
4 Department of Justice to say that starting tomorrow we're coming to audit the NRC
5 in terms of your disability program with regard to how our work impacts those
6 outside of NRC who are disabled. We were able to provide information regarding
7 that as well.

8 So, the agency -- we're not at ground zero in this program area and so the
9 auditors have not given us the final report, but we certainly were responsive and
10 able to share where we are and to give a path forward in terms of being fully
11 compliant in all these areas. Next slide, please.

12 Just by way of examples of some of the things that we've done in this
13 program area because we do have to collect data from external sources we did
14 get approval from OMB for that data collection effort. The pre-award compliance
15 reviews is something that once we started those -- we stood up this program --
16 once we started those we have been doing 100%.

17 When NRC gives funds to universities, research organizations, what have
18 you, we are to look at a pre-award compliance review to see how that particular
19 recipient will make sure that there's fairness and equity and equal access to those
20 benefits once they get them.

21 And it's through that information that we gathered for those pre-award
22 compliance reviews that we have been able to provide a number of information to

1 the oversight organizations, so that area has really served us well.

2 In our external activities we've provided technical assistance to our external
3 stakeholders and we put in place a contract for all offices to use to translate
4 documents so that we can provide access to our population or public that does not
5 have English as its primary language. And we have had some instances where
6 that contract has been used.

7 We can translate documents into a number of different languages, not just
8 Spanish, but probably roughly 15 or so languages. Next slide, please.

9 We're in the process of providing training to the offices within NRC. We
10 have a responsibility to provide training to our external stakeholders as well, for
11 instance, those individuals who we give funds to. We provide the technical
12 assistance to them as well. If they need something we're there to help them and
13 to ensure they're compliant or at least work with them to increase the chances of
14 their compliance.

15 In terms of broadening our outreach efforts we are in the process of doing
16 that to make sure that we're covering all the areas that are required by law and
17 regulations.

18 The offices are making use of the contract that we've put in place. And we
19 provide monitoring role to the agency for the efforts when we provide financial
20 Federal assistance. And as an office we also give funds as a part of our outreach
21 efforts to assist in this area as well. Next slide, please.

22 Just by way of closing, we've provided the information that's been required

1 of us by the various oversight agencies. The feedback that we've gotten from
2 those including the audit from the Department of Justice has been positive.

3 We've been able to state if there's an area of something that we have not
4 done yet we've given our path forward in terms of how we intend to accomplish
5 that. We've made progress. We know that we have additional work to do, but
6 we're certainly on our way.

7 And I thank you for being able to provide this information to you this
8 afternoon.

9 MR. MALLET: Thank you, Ren. Mr. Chairman and the other
10 Commissioners as you can see from this discussion there are quite a variety of
11 actions that we're taking to invest in human capital, our staff and investing in equal
12 employment opportunity and diversity management.

13 This concludes our presentation. We're happy to answer any questions
14 that you have.

15 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: Thank all of you for a great presentation and we
16 will begin our questions with Commissioner Jaczko.

17 COMMISSIONER JACZKO: Well, I appreciate the briefings. It's
18 always interesting to hear all the activities we have going on to maintain, I think, a
19 good work environment for people. I'm always reminded, I think, when I came to
20 the agency of the work we do in the diversity area. Because when I came to the
21 agency I think we were just beginning to roll out the Comprehensive Diversity
22 Management Plan and the program that went along with that.

1 We had the DPO program at that time. We had a new non-concurrence
2 process that developed while I've been here. We've now instituted the Team
3 Player Awards and we're working right now on looking at internal safety culture.
4 So, I think that's really a testament to this agency and the people that we have
5 here that there is a sense, I think, Jeri, as you talked about of always looking
6 forward and continuing to be proactive and continuing to improve the environment
7 for people here as we go along.

8 Diversity is certainly, I think, one of the areas where we have made a lot of
9 strides and I think the staff should really be commended for that.

10 We have a lot of different organizations, whether it's the formal EEO
11 organizations, the advisory committees that deal with equal opportunity
12 employment issues. We have other organizations like BIG, Blacks in Government,
13 GLOBE, the Association of Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Transgender employees.

14 We have disabled employee advocates all who work to make us stronger. I
15 think that really shows the spirit, I think, of the people that we have here. I never
16 know whether we're a great place to work because of the people we have or
17 because we're a great place to work we're able to really attract really good people.
18 Either way, I'm certainly pleased with that.

19 So, I appreciate all the work that you all do for that and really the staff as a
20 whole. I do, as usual, have some questions. I'll probably explore some areas
21 where I think we can continue to make improvements and continue to improve on
22 the good work that's been done.

1 Jim, maybe one that I could start off with you and this gets to some of these
2 issues that we've talked about, I think, perhaps with changing demographics that
3 we have in the staff and just really the turnover that we've seen. Not only have we
4 shifted, I think you talked a little bit about the tsunami and the fact that we now
5 have about 50% of our employees have been here five years or less, but we've
6 restructured the organization a lot. We have two new offices, when we split NRR
7 and NMSS and that's really only relatively recently that we did that.

8 One of the things as I talk to people and I hear anecdotally are issues with
9 areas in which we have branches that are starting to get large numbers of people.
10 Sometimes you hear numbers in the range of 16, 17, 18 sometimes in a branch.

11 Maybe Jim or anyone else who wants to comment can comment on that
12 and what you think some of the reasons for that are and how we're managing that
13 and how we're working through those situations to improve that.

14 One of the things Jim during one of our periodics I asked you for was to get
15 some information on where we are with branches and just the ratios of individuals
16 in a branch to the supervisors and you did provide me and the Commission, I
17 think, with some very interesting information on that.

18 I think it's useful and I think it's something that's probably useful to keep
19 track of going forward. I don't know if you want to comment on that or Bruce if you
20 want to comment on that.

21 MR. McDERMOTT: I'll comment on that. When we were at the
22 beginning of the surge one of the decisions we adopted with your support was let's

1 get over this 1:8.5 supervisory ratio thing. Let's get the supervisory structure in
2 place before this large number of new employees arrive. So, we did that.

3 It didn't actually change our supervisory ratio all that much. It dropped it
4 down to about 1:7.5 or something like that. That's the official ratio. We have
5 creative cheating triumphs. We have a lot of team leaders who are not officially
6 counted for OPM in that ratio number.

7 But if you look at all the numbers about 13% of the staff are managers,
8 team leaders or supervisors, which is a fairly robust number and that's where I
9 come up with my 1:7.5 or so.

10 COMMISSIONER JACZKO: So that number in your mind -- that
11 number has been relatively constant, then?

12 MR. McDERMOTT: Yeah. It's come down. We brought it down
13 from 1:8.5 to 9. What you have to watch out for is the fact that one size does not
14 fit all.

15 One of our new SESers Al -- , Laura Dudes told me I never had any trouble
16 supervising 20 people. I said, "What kind of people?" Pros who've been around a
17 long time who knew exactly what to do and all that. I said, "There's the rub."

18 It makes a difference whether you have an organization of eight thoroughly
19 trained professionals or four trained professionals and four NSPDPers that you
20 just acquired recently.

21 We believe that the key thing to staff effectiveness is quality supervision, primarily
22 at the level of the first-line supervisor. So, we tell our folks get face time.

1 Yesterday or the day before we did our NRC "What It Is and What It Does".

2 I always ask them one question: How many have had a conversation other
3 than "good morning, boss", with your supervisor in the last two days? And I look
4 to see how many hands go up. It's getting better and better each time I pull that
5 stunt. I see more hands. Maybe they know ahead of time that I'm going to ask the
6 question. I don't know.

7 But the idea is you have to talk. You have to get face time with the
8 supervisor and it has to be good talk; talk and listen. It has to be doing both
9 things. I'm done. I just harp on that because I think that's the key thing to
10 absorbing these new numbers, to inculcating our core values and doing all that.
11 That's what it does.

12 Now, I don't think we're perfect in every corner of the organization with
13 regard to this ratio of staff to supervisors. We've got to watch that.

14 COMMISSIONER JACZKO: Is that specifically something that we
15 do track?

16 MR. McDERMOTT: Yes. Oh, yeah, down to the gnat's eyebrow. I
17 believe there's a sheet in that voluminous book we gave you that says exactly
18 what the supervisor ratio is office by office.

19 MR. MALLETT: We have had some pockets, though, where the ratio
20 has not been satisfactory and we have over this past year fixed those as we
21 learned of them because as you're growing in some areas there is a mismatch
22 between the numbers of people. And we have seen where people get up above

1 say 12 or 13 people in a section or branch it gets too cumbersome to give that
2 attention. So, we have fixed some of those situations.

3 COMMISSIONER JACZKO: Well, I guess I will wait for a second
4 round.

5 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: Commissioner Lyons?

6 COMMISSIONER LYONS: Well, I'd certainly add to the compliments
7 that Greg already gave you. It's an excellent presentation and all of you are
8 discussing and presenting in an area where I think the agency as a whole and you
9 and your staff have a tremendous amount to be very, very proud. Your programs
10 are a large part of why we're rated where we are as the best place to work.

11 Just a few questions and starting with one for Jim Morris. Got to be careful
12 on Jim's here. On the graduate education, your slide 19. I just wanted to kind of
13 put in my plug for the importance of that program. I very much would hope that we
14 do look forward to further expansion of that program.

15 You mentioned in 2010 that you were looking towards some expansion. I
16 just view that program as a way of, in some sense, growing our own expertise in
17 key areas that may be hard to hire, hard to fill. And I hope we can look towards
18 expanding that very broadly across the agency. I think it's an outstanding program
19 and one that I'd like to see expanded. I don't think there's a question in there,
20 mainly compliments.

21 Question for another Jim, Jim Horn. On your slide 13 you talked about the
22 survey and certainly in that human capital survey there as you highlighted we

1 come out very, very well. But I'm just curious what kind of use is made of the data
2 in areas where we didn't do as well?

3 We've got plenty of areas that have "strongly agree" all the way up in the
4 90s and the 95s. That's fabulous. We have a few areas, one is pay for
5 performance. One that surprised me was telework. I was going to ask Miriam
6 about that. In the very few areas where we are down maybe in the 40% -- 40% or
7 50% -- I'm curious how we use that data.

8 MR. McDERMOTT: Let me try first. We have floggings.

9 COMMISSIONER LYONS: Besides that, Jim.

10 [LAUGHTER]

11 MR. McDERMOTT: We go to the -- it's a focus. As soon as we get
12 the results the next senior leadership meeting that we have is devoted almost
13 entirely to that subject saying, "Okay. Yeah, yeah, we know we're wonderful.
14 Where were we not quite so wonderful?" And we look at those. We figure out,
15 okay, what's it going to take? We get action plans out of that and they get put into
16 the EDO's tracking system and we say, "Okay, what are we doing?"

17 I can think of an example. We were surprised that in the first survey people
18 said "We don't think NRC pays enough attention to our personal security in the
19 workplace." We responded, "What? Us?" Sure enough we analyzed it and talked
20 to a couple of focus groups. It was mostly a communications issue. We hadn't
21 communicated exactly how it all works, what we do and all that.

22 Tim Hagan put on a great security day out in the exhibit area. Well

1 attended. Next time, the next survey the scores went up. We did better. We kind
2 of allayed some concerns on that. I wish I could think of other ones off the top of
3 my head. Maybe you know one.

4 MS. COHEN: One item and Jeri can embellish this if I get this
5 wrong, but there were a couple of instances, actually in the HR employee benefits
6 area, where we didn't do as well as we thought. We asked people, "Do you know
7 what your benefits are? Do you know who to go to?" And those kind of things.
8 We didn't score as well.

9 I personally think a lot of that is because of the sheer number of new
10 employees we have. A lot of the new employees -- and one of the things we're
11 also trying to fix is our new employee orientation so they don't sit through eight
12 hours of filling out paperwork, but also really focus on the things that they really
13 need to.

14 One of the things we've talked about is actually having some focus
15 sessions with new employees about what do they need to know about their
16 benefits. I think if you look at the sheer number of employees that have been here
17 five years or less maybe that has not been a focus area for us and it certainly is an
18 area that we need to look at.

19 In regard to question about telework --

20 COMMISSIONER LYONS: I was just surprised that came out in the
21 40s or 50's and I think we have a fabulous program. Is that also communication?

22 MS. COHEN: Well, I think -- there's a number of things and I

1 probably glossed over it too quickly when I spoke about the telework is that some
2 of the barriers that we see to telework are that some employees feel they need to
3 be seen; that when promotion opportunities come up or participation in certain
4 leadership programs arise if they're not actually in the office they might be
5 perceived to be forgotten about by their manager.

6 And so, I think that part of what we talked about before is really getting the
7 word out to employees and managers on how to strategize that if you have an
8 employee at home, you actually can call that employee. They need to be
9 available.

10 And so, I think part of what we're getting from the survey data are some
11 action plans so that we can address some of those perceived differences from
12 what we think is a really great program versus what an employee may perceive in
13 his or her work unit.

14 COMMISSIONER LYONS: Yes, Jeri?

15 MS. BUCHHOLZ: I was just going to add what Miriam had to say is
16 specifically with regard to your question about telework. There are answers where
17 you agree and answers where you disagree, but there's also the option to choose
18 "I don't know", "I don't have enough information to answer this question".

19 And in the area of telework it was not that our employees expressed
20 dissatisfaction, but that 30% of our employees stated, "I don't have enough
21 information to answer this question".

22 And in fact, if you rank order the responses by the highest number of "I

1 don't know's" the top five are all in the benefits area. So, one of the things that
2 we're looking at in HR is improving our benefits communications because clearly
3 we have a lot of new employees who aren't as knowledgeable about telework,
4 about child care subsidies was very high, flexible spending accounts. This was
5 one of the best benefits we apply to Federal employees was very high.

6 So, I think there's a lot to be gained by providing and having a
7 communications plan on our benefits programs to our employees.

8 MR. MALLETT: We probably have maybe overkilled the answer to
9 you, but I wanted to give you one more example. If you look at the questions
10 relating to "in my work unit steps are taken to deal with a poor performer" or --

11 COMMISSIONER LYONS: That's one of the lower ones.

12 MR. MALLETT: -- in my work the differences and performances are
13 recognized in a meaningful way". We say, "Well, gee, we need to work with the
14 first-line supervisors on that issue." So, we have this All Hands Supervisory
15 Meeting now and I forget how often we do it.

16 We've done at least one of them and in that area as well as with the office
17 directors we've emphasized talking to the supervisors about the expectations and
18 the core values in that area.

19 COMMISSIONER LYONS: Well, I appreciate all of those answers
20 because on the one hand the human capital survey has lots of good news and lots
21 of ways that we can pat ourselves on the back and be very proud of what we're
22 doing, but it does have some nuggets in there of areas where we can improve.

1 I just was hoping to explore the extent to which you're looking for those
2 opportunities and then acting on them. So, thank you for the answer.

3 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: Commissioner Svinicki?

4 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Thank you. I would strike many of the
5 same themes as my colleagues here. Jeri, I wanted to thank you for that
6 important point. Actually, the Chairman and I were just discussing this this
7 morning. There were a few questions where you look at it and you say, "Why
8 aren't the favorables as high as the Federal government?" And I had kind of
9 diagnosed the same thing as they were benefits related. In the absence of any
10 other data I could put forward two questions.

11 One is that maybe the particular benefit is not relevant to the entire
12 population of employees, so that might drive down awareness of it. And the
13 second diagnosis is what you're already looking at, which is what is the
14 communications about these programs.

15 So, as usual, you're ahead of the curve here. So, I was going to ask a
16 question about whether we were looking at that. So, I appreciate you making that
17 important distinction.

18 I just had a few other specific questions. In the background materials we
19 talk about the benefits of double encumbering positions. I wasn't sure of what our
20 liberties are to do that and how frequently we are. We've kind of leveled off in
21 retirements, Jim, as you were mentioning.

22 Do we have more opportunity now to do that? The benefits of it are kind of

1 intuitively obvious, particularly in niche areas of technical expertise. Could you talk
2 a little bit about that?

3 MR. McDERMOTT: We do it. To do it I go hat in hand to Jim Dyer
4 and say, "What was the traffic there?" Suppose I wanted to double encumber,
5 which has since burned more than one FTE in this particular role, at least for a
6 period of time, do we have the money? The answer right now is, "Yeah, we have
7 the money." Then we take advantage of it.

8 If the office can absorb it because they're under ceiling anyway, that's fine;
9 it's not an issue. But if the office is tight and yet they want to bring in somebody
10 for three, four months whatever it is to have a really good transition of power most
11 often we can find that the budget will support that in this or that particular year.
12 That's how we do it. We can't go hog wild.

13 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Okay. That gets me to a related topic,
14 which I guess I'll bring up and I've brought up in the past, which is use of rehired
15 annuitants. It makes a lot of sense and it's good for us where we need it, but it is
16 kind of a crutch. I've described it that way in the past. We need to have really
17 solid plans to get permanent hires in place and do the knowledge transfer that we
18 need to do there.

19 I think there's probably a little bit of fungibility between double encumbering
20 and use of rehired annuitants. And it may be that employees looking at retirement
21 are obviously going to look at what's financially advantageous to them. Bruce, did
22 you want to add anything?

1 table and in all the offices that were involved in that program and it was actually
2 headed up by Region IV.

3 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: I always take note of the trends and
4 the history since I am the newest Commissioner, but the term of service at an
5 individual plant has been creeping up. Is there a point at which -- it's really hard to
6 know and it was interesting because a resident said to me, "I'll do this without
7 attribution", but it was a good point.

8 He said, "If we're worried about people developing allegiances" -- and that's
9 something that can happen a month in. It can happen five years in. There's really
10 no hard metric there. But is there a point at which you all, Bruce, tend to get --
11 you're starting to get uncomfortable. Is there any year that you would say, "I don't
12 know how much it is, but this is too long?"

13 MR. MALLETT: I'll start and see if Jim has a thought as well. We
14 set seven years as the timeframe when we would normally ask someone to rotate
15 for many reasons. One of them was the objectivity issue. We felt that it was at
16 that point a good time to move the residents.

17 But I don't know, as you said very astutely, Commissioner, that there's any
18 certain time frame you can put on that. I've seen some people work at a site in a
19 few months and they're not objective any more. I've seen some work multiple
20 years before that hits them.

21 I think the main thing -- reason for doing it besides that is fresh eyes, a
22 fresh look at things and that's why we try to set some period. But we have with

1 your permission made exceptions to that where we believe it's appropriate. For
2 example, with the Watts Bar site previously when it was under the construction
3 phase for Unit 1 it just wasn't prudent to move the resident inspector after seven
4 years. It was not the right time to do that.

5 So, I think part of it is objectivity, but most of it is to get a set of fresh eyes.

6 Jim, do want to add anything?

7 MR. McDERMOTT: I would just add that, again, one size does not
8 necessarily fit all. We rely on the astuteness of the supervisors of the residents to
9 spot anything. Do you see any pattern of weaknesses in inspection reports and
10 follow ups and things like that?

11 Or if things are all over it and it's just getting better and better at that plant
12 because of this resident. That would influence us, I think, one way or the other
13 about things. Do we move them sooner or do we move them later? That kind of
14 thing.

15 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Thank you. Ren, I wanted to turn a
16 minute. You didn't take credit for this so I'm going to mention it. The NRC being
17 named in 2008 as a top supporter of HBCU accredited engineering programs. I
18 had nothing to do with it, but I'm proud of it and so I wanted to mention it.

19 I think that for everyone who had some element in that success I think that's
20 something for us really to be proud of. And I wanted to call that out to you
21 specifically because I think that your folks are keeping us ahead -- and you
22 focused on compliance reviews. I think we don't spend a lot of time focusing on

1 that, but as an agency we like to stay ahead of the curve and I think that's what
2 you're doing with those compliance reviews.

3 I know they're resource intensive. You and I have talked about how much
4 work goes into that, but as nuclear safety professionals we're always reminded to
5 stay ahead of emerging problems and trends and stay ahead of the learning curve.
6 I think the work done in your office is really helping NRC to do that in this
7 compliance area. There are a lot of emergent requirements and I think that we're
8 kind of identified among peer agencies as a leader.

9 It's something that you and the people in your office should really take a lot
10 of pride in. I noticed my time is up, Mr. Chairman. I'll wait for another round.

11 MS. KELLEY: If I may just say that in addition to being named a top
12 supporter for 2008 we were also named a top supporter for 2009. I think
13 Chairman Klein just got that letter. So, that's good news two times.

14 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Okay. Great. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: Well, I had a question initially about new
16 employee orientation, but Miriam answered part of it where you're trying to get to
17 the point of not having eight hours of filling out paperwork.

18 I guess the other question is you have a diversity of what we would call new
19 employees. They may be new to the NRC, but they're not new to employment.
20 Obviously, Milton Brown who just joined us in the CFO area. So, you have people
21 who have a lot of experience.

22 How do you do that orientation so that one size doesn't fit all? Do you have

1 an orientation program for those that have been in the Federal government a long
2 time versus those that are brand new employees?

3 MS. COHEN: One of the things that I know that we're doing in the
4 orientation is when we started out on this path it was very, very intensive. It was
5 almost a whole day. I think we've got it to under four hours, I believe. And what
6 we try to do is figure out what are the most important items and forms that people
7 need to fill out as soon as they come in.

8 I know we ask in those sessions how many of you are coming from another
9 Federal agency? How many of you are new to the Federal government? So that
10 in fact we can make it a more poignant orientation and a better use of the
11 employee's time.

12 If you look at "A Day in the Life Of" hopefully it's not going to be that far
13 down the road, but we're envisioning actually that very soon you'll be able to fill out
14 all those forms online even before you come into the agency.

15 And in fact, the Department of Interior is already testing out this software so
16 that in fact when you actually come to work on your first day you're actually
17 probably spending time with your supervisor and getting to know your colleagues
18 and not spending time filling out forms.

19 The automation is there. The capability is there. It's just a matter of timing
20 until we can get it here.

21 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: The challenge will be getting them the
22 password so they can get logged on to our system.

1 [LAUGHTER]

2 MS. COHEN: Right. That's another meeting.

3 MR. McDERMOTT: By then it will be 2016. I would add that, no, we
4 don't adequately differentiate between the populations that are coming in.
5 Somebody like Milt I'm sure Jim Dyer said, "Don't bother; we'll get you the form to
6 sign. You don't have to sit there all day." You have to get your badge and stuff
7 like that, but it's a real good thought. We need to see if we can do some triage
8 and say you can test out of some of these sessions.

9 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: That probably would be welcome by several
10 people.

11 MR. McDERMOTT: Yes, indeed.

12 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: I guess the other question, Miriam, in terms of
13 your flex program. What's been the biggest challenge to that program in terms of
14 its implementation? Have there been any major problems that you've identified?

15 MS. COHEN: I don't have any that I know of. I think Mike Johnson
16 is actually in the room. I don't want to put him on the spot.

17 [LAUGHTER]

18 MR. MALLETT: He heard the question.

19 MS. COHEN: The survey responses that we got were pretty positive
20 from both the employees themselves, the supervisors. Again, it was a small
21 sample size, but we haven't heard anything yet.

22 One of the things I will mention is in that in the Human Capital Council

1 which consists of the deputy office directors, we've actually asked some questions.
2 How is it really working? Are there any impacts on agency mission? Because
3 clearly none of these programs are going to work unless you make sure that the
4 agency mission work and the critical work of the agency is being done. We have
5 not seen any impact on that.

6 The one very minor issue I believe that came up and I don't want to say
7 "minor", but to the degree that there were some challenges with timekeepers
8 learning how to code all the new flexibilities into the time and attendance system.
9 That was one challenge I believe that was the denoted, but I'm not sure that that
10 was something that wasn't overcome after a couple of pay periods.

11 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: I'm sure that since there's about 10,000 codes
12 in the CFO area they can probably add another one for flextime, right, and go up
13 to 10,001.

14 Well, on the iLearn program, the other Jim -- one of several -- would you
15 describe that as user-friendly?

16 [LAUGHTER]

17 MR. MORRIS: I find that people embrace change, but they resist
18 changing. To answer your question directly I believe that that system can be a
19 very user-friendly system, as or more user-friendly than the system that we used
20 before.

21 I believe that it also can provide a lot of efficiencies and savings to the
22 users in the long run and to the agency as a whole.

1 There are a number of exciting capabilities about the system in the area of
2 not just learning management but talent management that as we expand and go
3 forward we may find will greatly ease a lot of the administrative burden that we
4 face in succession planning and competency management and in the delivery and
5 the documentation of training. So, yes, sir we're going to make that a user-friendly
6 system.

7 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: I've had several programs that I've taken mainly
8 at the Department of Defense and it really varied. Some of them were
9 user-friendly and some of them were not very user-friendly. So, there's probably
10 room for improvement.

11 MR. MORRIS: Absolutely. We're going to improve it. We're doing
12 that now.

13 MR. McDERMOTT: If I may add, this thing has a lot of great reports,
14 but the population isn't interested in reports. All they want to do is register for a
15 course and the supervisor says, "Gee, all I got to do is to approve the course."
16 Unless you're an office director, then you get to do it three times.

17 If you're an office director you already know that. You say, "Okay." It
18 comes back because now you're the second level supervisor. And then finally
19 you're your own great grandpa and you have to sign it again or approve it again.

20 I'm sure there's a way to fix that and the nice people at Plateau will help us,
21 I think, do that. I whine about that every time.

22 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: Jeri, you talked about some emerging

1 technologies and you said that we get those from DOI.

2 MS. BUCHHOLZ: That's correct.

3 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: Are there other agencies that we can draw from
4 or is that -- why just DOI or do you get others?

5 MS. BUCHHOLZ: Well, DOI is our HR line of a business provider.
6 They provide us with core HR and payroll systems. And the most effective and
7 efficient way for us to create our HR IT architecture is by capitalizing on tools that
8 bolt onto that core HR system.

9 And if we do this through NBC we have the advantage of purchasing power
10 of a third of the Federal government, which keeps our cost lows, the interfaces
11 required between these systems are already built and tested so that we know that
12 they work and we don't have to pay to build those interfaces.

13 And also, they are really looking corporately across the whole Federal
14 government to set up an IT infrastructure that hits all of the different lines of
15 businesses in human resources.

16 Some of these systems it's a condo version. There's a big system and we
17 purchase a small unit of that system. Other systems we would actually purchase
18 and they would bolt them on for us. But we're really looking at effectiveness first
19 and then efficiency second.

20 So, while we have choices about what systems we might choose to bolt
21 onto our core infrastructure there definitely are advantages of going with the
22 design that they are laying out for the Federal government.

1 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: Good to see that their across the board and not
2 just only looking at themselves.

3 MR. McDERMOTT: I can add on that. They have a very strong user
4 group and it includes or has access to a lot of the chinos downtown. The thing
5 that we're going to get from them for front-end processing is something that NASA
6 kind of began with and then NASA talked to them about, "You see what we do?
7 Why can't you do it?" And they looked around and said, "You know, we can tweak
8 this and it will work for everybody as well as NASA."

9 And they outsource all this. They just do the market research and come up
10 with what pretty much the community tells them is the best solution and then they
11 get that one for their bolt on and all us customers just go on to it.

12 There are other things out. You know our new EDAT system? The EDO's
13 office came and told me, "Guess what? We have -- that thing has an HR front end
14 kind of processing thing that you all should be very interested in." I'm interested in
15 it. I don't know if I'm going to deviate at all from doing business with Denver
16 because there's a lot of efficiency, but I'd like to see what they've got. I think it's
17 based in HHS. I think you know something about it.

18 MS. BUCHHOLZ: Yeah, I used it at HHS. I'm very familiar with it
19 and it's very, very similar to the tool that the Department of Interior has briefed to
20 us as well.

21 But as our HR line of business service provider they're constantly going out
22 and looking for the best tools and the best architecture that they can provide

1 because they are one of the largest providers of these services to the Federal
2 government.

3 And they have to be certified by OPM and they have to have all of their
4 technologies approved by OPM before they can deploy them. There are a lot of
5 advantages of going that direction.

6 Having said that, if there is a better direction for the NRC we always have
7 the option to go on our own and select a tool that we feel better meets our
8 business requirements.

9 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: Great. Thank you. Commissioner Jaczko?

10 COMMISSIONER JACZKO: Thanks. I want to follow up on some of
11 the discussion on resident inspectors. I think it's always an important area and we
12 talk a lot about that from a human capital standpoint and maintaining a good cadre
13 of resident inspectors is important.

14 I was somewhat surprised actually as I went back not only reviewing the
15 paper on the efforts to ensure that we're able to deal with some of the difficult
16 situations right now with moving residents around. It was surprising to me,
17 actually, I'd gone back then and pulled some of the GAO reports on that issue.

18 As the agency progressed we started out with a very short period of time
19 and I think it was three years, then we went to five. GAO said you shouldn't have
20 any limit and we then eventually settled around seven.

21 It was interesting that GAO as I recall the report that they issued or several
22 reports indicated they didn't think a length of service was really the right approach

1 to dealing with objectivity. They had other mechanisms they thought would do it
2 better like periodic reassignments back to Regional offices or periodic
3 assignments to other sites, things like that.

4 I think there are useful things in there if we do find ourselves unable to
5 move residents because of the financial situation and the housing market in
6 particular. One of the things that struck me looking at just some of the data on
7 resident inspectors was the high turnover for resident inspectors.

8 In 2007, it's about 46%, I think was the turnover rate. In 2008, it's less than
9 that, but still relatively high, about 30%. And now many of these are people
10 who've moved on as seniors. Others have moved into other positions within the
11 agency. They're not people who are leaving necessarily. In fact, I think almost
12 none of them are leaving other than through retirements.

13 But I'm just wondering, then, as we look at managing this issue is the
14 anticipation in 2009 that certainly in the resident inspectors, not at the senior level,
15 but at the resident level we will see that attrition rate come down a little bit? Again,
16 if you don't have that information feel free to provide it later, too.

17 MR. MALLETT: I appreciate that. We need to look at that data more
18 thoroughly than just a cursory look. The conjecture right now -- and we're going to
19 have a meeting here shortly amongst all the regional administrators and myself to
20 talk about just that subject.

21 I think when you look at the environment that we've been in in the last two
22 or three years there's been a lot of opportunities. Those are quite a skilled group

1 and there's been a lot of opportunities for them to seek promotions or other jobs in
2 the agency. I think that will slow down and that will help some of that.

3 But I do believe the approach that the regional administrators have
4 suggested is a way of tackling that and that is to give them in the budget a pool of
5 resources of FTEs so to speak, full-time equivalents, to allow them to adjust for
6 that. So that if you do have people move you've got a readiness pool -- I think the
7 Chairman has talked about this before -- that can just step right in.

8 That's what we're working on putting in the budget now. So, we owe you a
9 better answer as to what we predict in the future.

10 COMMISSIONER JACZKO: I appreciate that.

11 MR. MALLETT: We will give that to you.

12 COMMISSIONER JACZKO: That's fine.

13 MR. MALLETT: Do you have anything?

14 MR. McDERMOTT: Only that they're a premier group so they're
15 targeted by every office, including at the very top, to come because they bring
16 such a wealth of really good experience. That's not wrong, but we just have to
17 plan for the refurbishment behind them.

18 COMMISSIONER JACZKO: And one other piece of that and I think
19 it again was one of the more striking statistics that I saw there was that the median
20 value for -- again, this is just for residence not for seniors -- for their total resident
21 time was about a year.

22 I don't know. I haven't looked at the distribution to really know what the

1 distribution looks like. That would seem to indicate that people are there for fairly
2 short periods of time, which places an added emphasis, I think, on training and
3 insuring that since it is such a unique position within the agency that having the
4 ability to train individuals ahead of time and again to make sure that we're not
5 losing the important function that the residents play by having that high rate of
6 turnover and the limited amount of experience for the residents that are coming
7 into those positions.

8 Now, a lot of them are coming in with a lot of other either non-NRC or other
9 agency experience as well. So, that piece does seem to have gone up a little bit.

10 If I could turn to another issue and again I think a lot of people have
11 emphasized the importance of first-line supervisors and really the crucial role that
12 they play in the agency. And they deal with many of the most challenging
13 management issues. They provide that first line interface for employees, for
14 management.

15 One of the areas that's been important for me and I touched on it earlier a
16 lot of the things we've done in the area of ideas diversity of ensuring that we have
17 an environment in which people raise issues. As I said, we have a new
18 non-concurrence program. We have a lot of these other initiatives that are
19 ongoing.

20 And so, I'm wondering what we're doing particularly given the large number
21 of new employees that we have from a training standpoint for those first-line
22 supervisors in particular to train them and educate them about the programs that

1 are available like the DPO program, the non-concurrence program.

2 Is that a specific module we have for training? Is that part of their training
3 program? Do we deal with that in a formal way or informal way? Whoever knows.

4 MR. MORRIS: I guess that's me. We deal with it a couple different
5 ways. We do have training for all employees on some of those topics, but we
6 recently as part of the Leadership Academy have gone back and done a needs
7 analysis on the team leader and supervisory position. We found that what was
8 missing in a lot of cases was exactly what you're alluding to; a lot of these nuts
9 and bolts types of things.

10 Before what we had done was a lot more of the esoteric management and
11 leadership theory, but we're finding now that there are a lot more NRC specific
12 areas of how to do day-to-day things as supervisors that were omitted. We've
13 brought that in. We've actually expanded our leadership curriculum and I'm trying
14 to remember the exact number from about 80 hours to something close to like 140
15 hours. That's over a longer period of time.

16 We also have kind of bifurcated the training so that, again, not one size fits
17 all, but we've looked at what are the areas that you need to focus on as a team
18 leader? And then what would be the additional that you may want to gain when
19 you're promoted to a supervisory position.

20 So, to answer your question, yes, a great deal of it is covered by the
21 increase in the training for the Leadership Academy, but there some areas such as
22 the DPO that are covered by the training for all employees.

1 COMMISSIONER JACZKO: Thanks.

2 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: Commissioner Lyons?

3 COMMISSIONER LYONS: I just had what I think it is a short
4 question for either Jim McDermott or Miriam on the exit surveys. That's something
5 that in the past years of this meeting I know we've talked about a fair bit and
6 you've had encouragement from the Commission to take the exit surveys very
7 seriously.

8 I was impressed that the percentage of people who did separate who you
9 were able to survey was extremely high. So, certainly my compliments there. And
10 I also note that you're quite clear that there was no particular trend identified for
11 those that were departing.

12 One thought I wanted to share and perhaps ask if you're already doing. It
13 seems to me that it may be important as employees are leaving the agency to
14 group their responses depending on how long they've been at the agency. Not
15 based on the age of the employee, but based on the length -- that might be
16 interesting, too -- but it seems to me a potentially interesting way of looking at this
17 would be to look at their tenure within the agency because I can well imagine that
18 the folks who have been here -- the half that have been here less than five years
19 may have quite different views or quite different reasons for considering looking
20 elsewhere than someone who's been here for 10, 15, 20 years.

21 So, I guess it's just a question of if in the exit survey you do try to
22 distinguish on length of service in terms of evaluating the responses. And if you

1 don't, I'd at least like to suggest that you maybe consider that and just see if
2 there's any trends showing up.

3 MR. McDERMOTT: I'll take a stab and you can chime in. It's a good
4 idea. And by the way not hard. We can just bin -- we know how long people have
5 been here and we can bin the responses by length of service and see what it tells
6 us, if anything.

7 Because there are different cohorts within the agency. There are -- God
8 help us -- the pre-TMI people, which is very interesting. There are not so many of
9 them anymore and that's why the session that we've had with TMI seminar was
10 very, very important.

11 We thought we could even sort of demonstrate right here exactly how our
12 exit interview process works, but the general counsel was unwilling to participate.

13 [LAUGHTER]

14 MS. CYR: Reasons for leaving: 28 meetings on human factors is
15 enough.

16 [LAUGHTER]

17 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: Or maybe double that?

18 MR. McDERMOTT: Miriam, do want to comment?

19 MS. COHEN: No. We don't capture that right now, but that's very
20 easy to capture that information.

21 MR. McDERMOTT: We can do that. That's a good idea.

22 COMMISSIONER JACZKO: I think we do capture that.

1 COMMISSIONER LYONS: Do we? I didn't catch it.

2 COMMISSIONER JACZKO: The form that I have for the exit
3 interview survey does say length of NRC service.

4 MS. COHEN: I'm not sure we provide the analysis to that level of
5 detail.

6 COMMISSIONER JACZKO: But we do capture it?

7 MR. McDERMOTT: Oh, yeah.

8 COMMISSIONER LYONS: I was looking only at the analysis of it
9 and it didn't seem to break it out that way.

10 MR. McDERMOTT: It didn't, but we could.

11 COMMISSIONER LYONS: I think one of you, maybe you, Jim,
12 made the comment that retention is going to be perhaps a growing challenge in
13 the future and I'm just trying to look ahead and suggest that to the extent we can
14 anticipate that and get that data it might help us.

15 MR. McDERMOTT: With my incredible force I have constantly
16 predicted attrition is going to be a half a percentage point higher and it's been half
17 a percent lower each year that I've made that.

18 COMMISSIONER LYONS: I've noticed. I tried not to mention that.
19 Thank you, sir.

20 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: Commissioner Svinicki?

21 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Thank you. Commissioner Jaczko, I
22 believe, made mention of the Comprehensive Diversity Management Plan and

1 there's an item in there that talks about increasing our emphasis on developing the
2 feeder group applicants for leadership and executive positions. If we think about
3 our statistics in the SES ranks of women and minority, obviously where you need
4 to begin to address those statistics is in the GG-15 and other ranks. And certainly
5 the Leadership Potential Program and SES candidate development program I
6 think that we strive for diversity in those programs.

7 Would any of you -- certainly Jim and Miriam -- but anyone at the table who
8 would like to talk about this. Again, our Diversity Management Plan embraces this
9 as a goal of increasing this emphasis on developing these feeder groups.

10 Can you share specifics because it's one thing to have the objective; it's
11 another thing to know how to go about it.

12 MR. McDERMOTT: I'll start. First of all, you do this very carefully.
13 We don't pick people for the Leadership Potential Program or the SES Candidate
14 Development Program because of race, gender, age, whenever.

15 What we try and do -- you're exactly on it -- we try to stock the feeder pools
16 so that there's a reasonable chance that for openers the SES core will begin to
17 better reflect the composition of the feeder group and the feeder group will better
18 reflect the composition of the agency as a whole and we'll fix the agency as a
19 whole by again targeting recruitment where we can and should.

20 If we hire at entry-level or at any level enough members of targeted groups
21 we'll get there and we'll get there properly. But it all begins with hiring the right
22 people. It also begins with providing them the proper mentoring and training and

1 development.

2 And Ren is working on more formal instruction in how to mentor and so
3 forth, but one kind of mentoring does not fit all. You have to be sensitive to exactly
4 what the real issues are.

5 I had met with your predecessor once in a room where there were a couple
6 of consultants, there was me and there was a senior executive from a targeted
7 group. And I said, "I've got a little test here. When I come into this room I rate my
8 inclusion factor as 105%. How do you rate yours, I asked my colleague?" He
9 said, "50%, 60% in most meetings that I go into." That's a real thing. Can I
10 analyze it? I'm telling you everybody's head in the room did what yours did. It
11 went up and down. Yeah. What's my sense of inclusion in this group? I think
12 that's getting better.

13 I don't know how to measure that. Maybe there are people who know how
14 to measure it, but that's a big piece of building the confidence levels and all that to
15 get in and be full participants in all our big programs including the ones that lead
16 you to the top of the organization.

17 MS. KELLEY: I would just like to add to what Jim has said. The first
18 thing getting a diverse group of employees through the door is very important.
19 And so, having a diverse applicant pool is a must because you've got to select
20 based on merit, but the wider you cast that net the greater the chance that you will
21 have a diverse group of individuals selected.

22 And then what do we do with them once we get the employees on board?

1 Making sure that managers across the agency give everyone a fair opportunity to
2 be that shining star. And I think sometimes we have a tendency because of press
3 of business or what have you to go to the people that we know and we're
4 comfortable with and that we've used in the past and I think one of the things that
5 we have to be aware and conscious of is that you've got to give opportunities to a
6 broad group of people.

7 You've got to nurture. You've got to coach. You've got to instruct. You've
8 got to do the things that's necessary to put all the individuals in the best chance of
9 succeeding. And that is something that is very important for first-line supervisors
10 and others to remember because under the operating structure that Bill is putting
11 in place of making sure that you push things down to the right level.

12 I think that's going to increase the opportunities for NRC employees across
13 the spectrum to have an opportunity to brief the Commission individually or maybe
14 as a group and to brief other senior managers because the more that every person
15 is known the greater their chances of being successful and getting into the LPP
16 the SESCDP. If you have those opportunities it definitely is a plus.

17 If you have not, subconsciously it can be used against you; not that you
18 would try to do that consciously, but if you don't know that individual and you know
19 someone else and you know their capabilities and you've seen them demonstrate
20 that, then you're more likely to tip the scale to the person that you know. So, that's
21 one thing that I would add that is important to this area.

22 And if I may just take a minute. Commissioner Jaczko asked a question on

1 training earlier and I did not state that we also have the supervisory training for
2 managers and supervisors that addresses the diversity piece of what we do. And
3 so, that is something else.

4 I know Jim alluded to having the technical training that covers a number of
5 areas, but that is required training as well and we do have refresher training in that
6 area that kind of refreshes those topics for managers and supervisors.

7 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: I appreciate -- those are both
8 important points. So, I appreciate you adding that in.

9 As a final point of clarification I know that we've been collecting diversity
10 best practices across the Regions and the offices. Are we doing a good cross
11 fertilization of when we have those identified of sharing them then across
12 organizations?

13 MS. KELLEY: We have made those things available, the practices
14 available to the agency by putting them on our web page. We announced that, but
15 I think we've got to take it a step further and that is to as we meet with offices to
16 engage them in discussions about the list and just kind of call that list to their
17 attention and make sure they're aware that it's there.

18 And if we know of an office that has a need and we've seen a practice in
19 another office to just provide that information or that feedback. So, we've started.
20 The information is on our web page. We've announced that to the agency and
21 we're intending to take it one step further by holding discussions as we talk to the
22 offices about other things.

1 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Okay. Thank you. Thank you,
2 Mr. Chairman.

3 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: Ren, my final question is in your area. As I've
4 said before, I think the NRC may not have the best EEO or small business
5 program I've seen, but it's sure ahead of whatever is in second place. It really
6 starts with leadership from you and your whole team.

7 I guess I'd just ask a final question. What is your biggest challenge that you
8 have in your area as you look forward? As Jeri said, looking forward, what do you
9 see as your biggest challenge to maintaining your excellent program?

10 MS. KELLEY: Keeping all the balls in the air because right now we
11 do have a number of added responsibilities that have been put on the plate. And
12 so, we are kind of looking at the program in its entirety to say how can we
13 implement what's required within the resources that we have?

14 And if we cannot do we take something off the plate if at all possible
15 because most of what we do is required by some mandate. And there really isn't
16 much room to just put things in there because we'd like to or whatever.

17 But I think that is it in terms of looking at all of the things that are required
18 that we need to do and finding a way to get that done.

19 And we've been working with the EDO's office in terms of looking at the
20 entire pot and trying to make some decisions as to how do we ensure success in
21 the various areas and what, if anything, can we take off the plate?

22 MR. MALLET: If I could add. I think there's another one. I agree

1 with you on that. I believe there's another one and that is, as I said in the
2 beginning, being proactive.

3 As leaders and managers and first-line supervisors as we have a lot of
4 busyness, a lot of things we're doing, sometimes we lose track of looking for -- as
5 Commissioner Svinicki said -- the best practice. And so, I think we have to keep
6 emphasizing it and I would encourage us to do that. I think that's probably our
7 largest challenge.

8 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: Thanks. Any final questions? Well, thank all of
9 you for a great --

10 MR. McDERMOTT: Dale should get a chance to say a word.

11 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: I did not have that request on my list.

12 MR. YEILDING: Thank you, Jim, for reminding. Thank you,
13 Chairman and Commissioners. My name is Dale Yeilding. I'm the local chapter
14 president of the National Treasury Employees Union and by law I always get the
15 last five or 10 minutes to speak.

16 I came in here with just a small card, but I've got it filled here, so I hope not
17 to take a full 10 minutes, but maybe I will. I'll start off on a positive note. I like to
18 extend some thanks. Being the exclusive representative of NRC employees I'd
19 like to thank the Commission and senior management for several things.

20 One is raising the transit subsidy. I was the first one to remind HR the day
21 after Obama signed the Recovery Act that IRS regulation lifted the \$120 limit to
22 \$230 for transit subsidy and the agency was fairly prompt in implementing that.

1 So, thanks for that on behalf of employees.

2 I'd like to thank the agency for raising childcare subsidy. They had a
3 \$40,000 budget last year and only about \$8,000 in the budget was distributed
4 because not enough NRC low-income families qualified for it and their first thought
5 was to raise the ceiling. They sat down at the negotiating table with me and we've
6 raised many of the parameters and we're going to take a look at if we raise them
7 enough to see if we can get more money out the door on an annual basis to
8 approach the now \$50,000 budget for that area. So, thanks for that.

9 I'd like to thank the Commission for credit monitoring. I think was a
10 Commission initiative to ask the agency in the event of a personally identifiable
11 information breach if the agency made a mistake and accidentally released some
12 personal information, addresses, Social Security numbers, whatever, that would
13 affect the possible security and financial integrity of employees, that if it was a
14 serious breach the Commission asked for the agency to consider credit monitoring
15 services which are on the order of magnitude of about \$25 a year per employee.
16 And if it was a serious breach that has been implemented.

17 The negative aspect of that program is there's certain low-level breaches
18 which the agency categorizes as not significant that they will not even notify the
19 employee. So, I'm at the bargaining table at that one. Hopefully, the agency will
20 see the light and for any breach that is reportable to the Department of Homeland
21 Security that reaches that level we hope that at least the affected employees
22 would be notified. And we'll see if we can be successful in that. So, that's the end

1 of the thanks.

2 Let me turn to being a little critical now. It looks like Mr. McDermott has just
3 about everybody on his human resource team sitting at the table except one very
4 important aspect of his department and that's labor relations. There was no part of
5 this briefing at all that dealt at all with labor relations.

6 Labor relations is not just dealing with the National Treasury Employees
7 Union, but dealing with all aspects of what Jim has to deal with with disciplining
8 employees, coaching managers on that aspect and I guess he's got a staff of
9 about five or six or seven people. So, that is a significant aspect.

10 And I'm not going to bring our current term negotiations to the table here,
11 but I had a coffee and doughnut meeting this morning with employees where we
12 talked specifically for about an hour and a half to employees about the agency's
13 proposals that definitely affect human capital to change the policies and
14 procedures here at this agency that would retain employees.

15 And I went out with an announcement about two days ago and I have put
16 together a website that have analyzed the situation of our current collective
17 bargaining. I've been at the bargaining table now for over 200 hours addressing
18 human resource proposals and the union's proposals. And sorry to say that we're
19 half complete in signing things off, but I think we're miles and miles apart on
20 agreement on some of the proposals.

21 I don't want to get into detail on that. In fact, I hope I can come back in six
22 months at the next meeting and report that we signed and reached an agreement

1 and we didn't have to go to impasse procedures with the Federal Service Impasse
2 Panel.

3 I would hope somebody is overlooking human resources who has the
4 administrative responsibility for most of the collective bargaining agreement
5 policies, appraisals, merit selection, annual leave, guidance of supervisors and
6 actually take a close look at the proposals from the agency to see if that is going to
7 keep this place the best place to work in the Federal government.

8 Let me jump to some specifics. Orientation. I've been around since
9 orientation was a full day and it was always the forms and filling out before I had
10 my half hour with new employees at orientation. I just can't conceive why it's that
11 big of a deal to have a full day of orientation for an employee the first time they
12 come here to work for the NRC. They used to be able to watch a nice video that
13 was pretty historical. Not hysterical, but historical, and showed a lot of the
14 functionings of the agency.

15 And all this emphasis to reduce orientation down from eight hours to four
16 hours and the big flag-waving that that's a big success, I just don't understand why
17 an extra half a day for an employee to get a fresh start with some of the
18 functionings of this agency is that big of a deal.

19 I've been around in this 8.5:1 ratio way back when it was an initiative
20 because we were down at the 5:1 ration at the NRC. We're looking at this steep
21 structure and why was that ration so high is because the agency used to have lots
22 and lots and lots of layers of management and the whole impact of this push for

1 8.5:1 was to flatten it out.

2 And now as we're moving in the other direction I'm looking for an Obama
3 executive order that puts the ratio and staffing plan back in the permissive subjects
4 that would require NTEU involvement. President Clinton gave an executive order
5 that actually made the permissive subjects of numbers, types and grades or
6 staffing plan changes negotiable and for about over five years we did at the
7 partnership table with the union negotiate staffing plan changes and restructuring
8 and the union was an integral part in reducing the agency's 5:1 ratio back to a
9 compatible 8:1 ratio.

10 So, why we're going in the other direction and we're asking questions of
11 why is a first-line supervisor supervising 15 people? Well, it's because there's lots
12 of layers of management above them and we have deputies and deputies to other
13 people and do we need all these other extra layers of management? Because
14 every layer of management and every deputy at a level just adds more to the
15 first-line supervisor in order to manage his staff.

16 I didn't hear anything at this briefing about the no fear report which was
17 recently released. I guess that's going to be every other. We get more of the
18 committee involvement every other year -- or every other six month briefing rather
19 than this one because I didn't see any of the committees sitting there.

20 Lean Six Sigma. Jim was taking credit for streamlining his hiring of outside
21 candidates and doing a lot of Lean Six Sigma to the hiring process. I remember
22 reading a quote in "Government Executive" magazine where Jim was proud that

1 he's trying to reduce the paperwork for new employees to get hired and he wanted
2 to see how they're going to operate and function when he puts them to work.

3 Well, we're tracking so many different things here maybe we should track
4 how many failures we did by not having a very accurate, very -- a rating panel, a
5 very detailed analysis of the applicants to see if we are bringing the wrong people
6 in. And maybe that one aspect of the exit report, how long they were here, may be
7 a way to answer that.

8 If they've been only here less than a year or how many probationary
9 employees does the agency remove in their probationary period because they can
10 do that without going through any litigation for any reason; the whole definition of
11 probationary period. So, that might be something to look at as a black mark
12 against the hiring program if you had to remove somebody in the probationary
13 period meaning you made the wrong choice when you hired.

14 Residents. The complaints I've heard from resident inspectors is the new
15 contractor that the agency hired for the home sale program. I guess the previous
16 contractor I think failed and had some financial troubles, but the new contractor in
17 which the agency buys your home in order to support your transfer has a very
18 painful appraisal process.

19 This is the first I ever heard that there's two types of home appraisals.
20 There's a fast sell home appraisal and that's what the agency's contractor used.
21 An appraisal of your home that will sell in 90 days is a different appraisal than what
22 the standard time a home is on the market for.

1 So, if you're in an economic period where homes are not selling at a fast
2 rate and the home sale average is like nine months, that appraisal is going to be a
3 lot higher value than what you need to lower the price of your house to get it to sell
4 in 90 days. And that was the complaint I'd heard from a lot of resident inspectors
5 that they would much -- economically almost be forced to have to sell their house
6 themselves rather than use the home sale program.

7 Telework. Telework. I hope the Commission is aware that we have two
8 types of telework: fixed schedule telework -- one, two, three days a week. It
9 actually can go up to five days a week with senior management approval.

10 And we have a project based telework. Project based telework is just that:
11 for a particular project. No paperwork, a handshake agreement with your boss.
12 Three hours project, three-day project, something short. It doesn't have to have a
13 lot of analysis whether or not you're the right person or the right candidate
14 because the supervisor just looks at the project. Is that transportable? Can you
15 do it at home? Bingo! Go home and do the project.

16 So, that is the untracked, undocumented, no paper work. There's no way to
17 report to Congress or to OPM how many people are working project-based and
18 that's probably the most successful.

19 I view it and employees view it as the most successful and I'm going to take
20 a shot at upper management, but is because it's the relationship between the
21 first-line supervisor and the employee you don't get senior management involved
22 in improving long-term work at home one, two, and three days. It's just a first-line

1 supervisor that can shake a hand of the employee and say, "Go home and get the
2 project done."

3 To bring bureaucracy and paperwork and controls into project-based will kill
4 it. I'll protect to my tombstone the paperless aspect of project-based work at
5 home.

6 Fixed schedule work at home. Why isn't it working? I don't have the
7 answer to that. In fact, I was the one that negotiated work at home six years ago
8 into the collective bargaining agreement. And when we put two management
9 controls into it is the position eligible? Is the person eligible? So, we put those
10 two tests. The person being eligible -- you've got to be fully successfully
11 performing and not have some conduct problems. So, 99% of NRC employees
12 satisfies that.

13 Is the position eligible? Well, before I signed off on that five years ago I
14 said, "Wait a minute NRC. How many positions are you talking about before I give
15 you carte blanche non-grievability for work at home?"

16 I said let's stop bargaining for two months. The agency went and asked
17 every office director how many positions are eligible for work at home? This was,
18 I'm talking, six or seven years ago. One thousand. I've that stacks of staffing
19 plans from six years ago. One thousand positions out of then 2,200 employees
20 were eligible; about 50%.

21 The union was happy with that pilot program. We'll get out and we'll do it.
22 A couple years went by the EDO said at the union's prodding, "Hey, let's now after

1 success see if some more positions may be eligible." They went out to office
2 directors and they got about 100 more positions.

3 Commissioner Merrifield -- I even got the letter -- even asked, "How many
4 did you actually open it to after that 1,000?" Now we're talking about four years
5 ago and it was up to about 1,100 positions eligible.

6 About a year-and-a-half ago Congressman Waxman asked the agency how
7 many positions are eligible for work at home at the NRC? The agency reported
8 2,500.

9 One of the things I'm going to be asking for at the bargaining table is for the
10 agency to go back and ask managers, "Are you really identifying all of your
11 positions or 80% or 90% of them as eligible for work at home?" Because once a
12 person is told that your position is eligible, then they are eligible. Now, we're just
13 talking about office coverage and how often they work at home.

14 But there's a lot of offices and a lot of controlling managers that are just not
15 making positions eligible and if we quantify that we can probably open up more
16 work at home opportunities.

17 I'm term bargaining the contract, but as the agency comes forward and
18 requests changes to policy -- not policy in regulating the industry or policy
19 regulating nuclear materials, but policy dealing with the workplace -- the agency
20 has to come to the union and negotiate policy change. That might be something
21 that we track, oversee, because it doesn't always complete successfully.

22 One example and I'll turn over the podium here. The agency wanted to

1 change the rules of behavior to access computer systems. They came with about
2 an eight, ten page document and I rolled my eyes back and sat down with my chief
3 steward who works in OIS and we came up with about two or three pages of
4 comments. We sat down to bargain rules of behavior. And basically it wasn't too
5 successful. We had two meetings.

6 We didn't hear from the agency for a couple months. One of the Regions
7 implemented the rules of behavior and I called foul. I said, "Stop the presses.
8 We're still bargaining rules of behavior. How can you be implementing it?" They
9 retracted it waiting for OIS to finish bargaining with the union.

10 I just recently have been told that NSIR has implemented rules of behavior
11 for its incident response team. So, not to beat this topic to death, but the aspect is
12 when HR engages in notifying the union to bargain a policy change somebody
13 should open up an EDO ticket or some kind of a ticket in the system and say,
14 "Wow! Are we going to complete bargaining with the union, or if we're at impasse
15 there's procedures through impasse panel and asking Federal Mediation
16 Reconciliation Service to assist in help in that aspect. I don't have a whole lot of
17 stories of that aspect to identify, but that's just one.

18 One last comment here. It amazes me that we have all these training
19 programs that are great for employees: qualification programs, check off lists for
20 even down to the secretary level, but when it comes to supervisors we let them
21 begin supervising and give them identification that they need to complete their
22 supervisor training in a year.

1 Well, I face supervisors at the grievance table or face employees feeling
2 like they haven't been appraised properly and one of the first questions I'm always
3 asking them is, "Do you have a new supervisor." They say, "Yes." Do you think
4 he's had his supervisor or she has had her supervisor training? And that's always
5 a question that comes up. Why can't we make new supervisors become qualified
6 before we start putting them leading employees?

7 Thank you very much.

8 CHAIRMAN KLEIN: Well, I think all of you for a great presentation.
9 Obviously, as we've said before people are our greatest asset and you all do a
10 great job of hiring, training and retaining. So, keep up the good work.

11 And as Jeri indicated I look forward to reading that this is the best place to
12 work in 2011, 2013 and 2015. Meeting is adjourned.

13 (Whereupon, meeting was adjourned.)