

NR 97-23
March 7, 1997

OCC Publishes Report on National Bank Appeals Process

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) today announced publication of the Report of the Ombudsman: 1995-1996, an overview of the agency's appeals process for national banks.

"The appeals process ensures national banks a fair and expeditious review of agency decisions and actions without a presumption of favoritism towards anyone," said OCC Ombudsman Samuel P. Golden. "Often we can facilitate a quick solution to a problem by identifying the appropriate decision makers and technical experts, asking the right questions or cutting red tape."

The primary ongoing work of the Office of the Ombudsman involves the resolution of individual case appeals, ensuring compliance with the law and without compromising the safety and soundness of the banks involved. Between September 1993 (when the national bank appeals process was established by the OCC) and December 1996, the Ombudsman and his staff received a total of 469 contacts from national banks regarding supervisory matters. A large number of these involved issues that were resolved without the filing of a formal appeal. Formal appeals to the Ombudsman totaled 68 of these contacts. Summaries of the formal cases are included in the Report.

The Report also includes sections describing the vision and mission of the Office of the Ombudsman, lessons learned through the appeals process, and ways in which those lessons have enhanced the OCC's supervisory efforts. It also contains basic statistics describing appeal activity by year through December 31, 1996, and a section devoted to the OCC's examination questionnaire. The examination questionnaire has been attached to all examination reports since June 30, 1995. The agency has received voluntary feedback on the exam process from bankers across the country.

"The feedback we've received through examination questionnaires has been thoughtful and constructive," added Golden. "The bankers' suggestions provide a useful opportunity to improve the agency's supervision and quality of service to national banks."

Copies of the Report of the Ombudsman: 1995-1996 were mailed to all national banks, OCC examiners, other federal agencies and branches of foreign banks. Single copy requests from other interested parties should be directed to the OCC by writing to: The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Public Disclosure Room, Mail Stop 1-5, Washington, D.C. 20219, or by faxing a request to (202) 874-4448.

#

The OCC charters, regulates and supervises approximately 2,800 national banks and 66 federal branches and agencies of foreign banks in the U.S., accounting for more than half the nation's banking assets. Its mission is to ensure a safe, sound and competitive national banking system that supports the citizens, communities and economy of the United States.