

HR Exchange

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Fourth Quarter 2003

OPM Issues FY 04 Compensation Report

Dayna Petete, OPM

The FY 04 *Annual Compensation Report*, submitted December 1 by OPM to the Governor and legislative leadership, reveals that for the second year in a row, pay for state government classified employees is, on average, 11.3 percent below the competitive labor market.

The state Legislature has provided state employees with only one pay raise in the last five years—a \$2,000 increase for all state employees effective October 1, 2000. It was not sufficient to reduce the market gap. Neither has state agency use of a variety of discretionary pay adjustments that the Legislature has authorized since FY 00. State agencies are prohibited from requesting additional funding to provide for these pay adjustments for state employees, and the current revenue shortfall and resulting budget reductions have left many agencies without the means to continue to fund these adjustments out of existing appropriations, particularly for job family levels that are significantly below market.

“OPM recommends that the Legislature address this market deficit by providing additional funding to state agencies to accomplish targeted market adjustments,” Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., OPM Administrator and Governor Brad Henry’s Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration commented. “Such an allocation would enable state agencies to address critical recruitment and retention issues without creating the pay alignment problems that typically result from across-the-board increases.”

“OPM also recommends that the minimums, midpoints, and maximums of classified pay bands be adjusted upward by five percent,” Jackson continued. “If such an adjustment is made, it would cost approximately \$1 million to bring the pay of 1,014

state employees currently employed by 20 different state agencies up to the adjusted minimum of these pay bands. And, it is possible that this pay band adjustment could be implemented without additional funding from the Legislature, as was the case with the last adjustment in 2001,” Jackson added.

“Though OPM does not recommend a general increase for all state employees, primarily because of the continuing tight budget situation that has resulted in substantial reductions in many state agency budgets,” Jackson noted, “we would strongly encourage the Governor and members of the Legislature to consider an across-the-board pay raise for all state employees in the event funds available for appropriation exceed current expectations.”

The *Report* also indicates that although turnover has decreased since last year when the overall rate for the classified workforce as a whole was 11.8 percent and the voluntary turnover rate was 10.3 percent, it still remains high at 11.2 percent overall and 9.6 percent for voluntary turnover. The overall turnover rate reflects resignations, retirements, and discharges that occurred during FY 03, while the voluntary rate is based on resignations and retirements only. OPM conservatively estimates that in FY 03 turnover cost the state over \$54 million.

This year’s *Report* also considers the pay of state government’s top agency executives. OPM has studied this issue since 2001, when Senate Bill 224 became law. The study required by SB 224, which was completed in January 2002 and revised this

State Employee Classifications Targeted by Task Force

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10/23/03 *Capitol Network News*

Classification of state employees was the focus the initial meeting of the Task Force on State Classification which was held October 23.

Oscar Jackson, . . . administrator for the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), said the merit system dated back to 1936 when the people voted to add it to the Constitution. He said it put some restrictions on the employment of classified positions.

Dayna Petete, assistant administrator for communications and legislative liaison for OPM, said the Social Security amendment to the state Constitution allowed for a “reasonable” number of exemptions from the classification category.

Petete said a number of changes were made to the procedures regarding classification and the oversight of those issues throughout the years since the original amendment. The Oklahoma Merit Protection Commission and OPM were both created in 1982, Petete said.

Currently, Petete said the merit system was structured to include the following:

- position classification;
- compensation and benefits;
- salary administration;
- recruitment and certification;
- job analysis, selection and test administration; and
- human resource development.

Merit system agencies under the current system include classified positions and employees as well as unclassified employees, Petete said, while non-merit system agen-

Comp Report, continued on page 4

Task Force, continued on page 2

From the Desk of the Administrator

As this calendar year draws to a close, I have been reflecting on the accomplishments of the past 12 months. I believe you will agree that 2003 was one of the most challenging years for the Office of Personnel Management during my tenure as Administrator and Cabinet Secretary.

As I mentioned in my last *From the Desk of the Administrator*, the OPM budget has been significantly reduced, and we now have fewer positions and employees. My first inclination was to focus on what we have lost; a more positive exercise, however, is to concentrate on what remains: Specifically, the contributions that 88 OPM Team members have made and continue to make, *despite* budget challenges, on behalf of the 114 state agencies (65 Merit System and 49 non-Merit System) and 37,759 state employees (27,817 classified and 9,942 unclassified) we serve.

Many of you may have heard me state my strong belief that "Leadership Counts!". Throughout 2003, OPM Team members have risen to the occasion in providing excellent human resource services to state agencies and their employees with professionalism and integrity. Further strengthening OPM's commitment to quality and underscoring that leadership really *does* count, the 14 members of the OPM Management Team listed below have provided outstanding management and direction for OPM during the past year:

Hank Batty
Deputy Administrator for Programs

Janet Anderson
Executive Assistant

Marilyn Capps
*Associate Administrator for
Financial Management Services &
Chief Financial Officer*

Dayna R. Petete
*Assistant Administrator for Communications
and Legislative Liaison*

Kimberlee Williams
Chief Policy Attorney

Diane Haser-Bennett
*Assistant Administrator for
Management Services*

Glenda Gesell
*Assistant Administrator for
Information Technology Services*



Carrie Rohr
*Director of Human Resource
Development Services*

David Hays
Director of Classification

Tom Patt
*Director of Compensation
and Workforce Planning*

Tom Impson
Director of Applicant Services

Natasba Riley
Director of Personnel Assessment

Brenda Thornton
*Director of Equal Opportunity
and Workforce Diversity*

Robert Stevens
*Director of the OPM State
Employee Assistance Program*

While there are sure to be new challenges in 2004, there will also be fresh opportunities to excel and to continue to fulfill our commitment to the OPM Mission: "To serve the people of Oklahoma by delivering reliable and innovative human resource services to our partner agencies to achieve their missions".

Best wishes for the holiday season and the coming year!

Oklahoma Office of Personnel Management
2101 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Suite G-80
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
(405) 521-2177

Oscar B. Jackson, Jr.
Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources & Administration

Dayna R. Petete
*Assistant Administrator for Communications & Legislative Liaison
Editor*

Tom Patt, Natasha Riley, Carrie Rohr, Robert Stevens, Kimberlee Williams
Contributors

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Task Force, continued from page 1

cies had only unclassified positions and employees.

In the area of hiring, Petete said classified positions had hiring rules, open competitiveness and a preference for veterans while unclassified positions had no universal procedures for recruitment and appointment, no veterans' preference and the hiring rule did not apply.

Petete said, in dealing with compensation, classified employees were governed by the classification and compensation provisions of the Oklahoma Personnel Act and the Merit Rules. However, unclassified employees had issues related to compensation and job duties typically determined by the appointing authority unless otherwise provided for in the Oklahoma statutes.

As for discipline, Petete said classified employees were given notice and opportunity to respond, there was a statutory procedure and they could appeal to the Merit Protection Commission. On the other hand, unclassified employees were not given these rights unless there was an alleged violation of the prohibition against discrimination or freedom of expression.

Rep. Joe Sweeden, D-Pawhuska, asked why an employee would be moved from classified to unclassified, and Petete responded it was usually to allow for some form of compensation outside what was allowed through the merit system. Petete added sometimes it was done to make it easier to fill a position.

Petete pointed out there was little agreement among other states as far as who should be in the unclassified service and what laws applied to it, and she mentioned the states of Texas, Georgia, Florida and Colorado as examples of states that had

Task Force, continued on page 3

Task Force, continued from page 2
gone different routes.

Diane Haser-Bennett, assistant administrator for the department of management services at OPM, said general types of authorizations varied from agency to agency. The Oklahoma Health Care Authority was given as an example of an agency that had 100 percent non-classification of employees.

Sweeden asked why this agency was set up this way, and Haser-Bennett said this option was done in 1995. Rep. Jari Askins, D-Duncan, said it had been allowed so the agency could set up quickly but attempts to change the full non-classification at the agency had been either vetoed or rejected every year by the legislative or executive branches of government.

“They have fought it successfully thus far,” Askins said.

Sen. Kenneth Corn, D-Howe, said some agencies had classified employees that had evaded the hiring requirements set in law. He said there were some unqualified people qualifying for various positions.

Hank Batty, deputy administrator for OPM, said some agencies did not allow this type of procedure, and when an unqualified employee was found it [the application] was sent back to the agency.

Corn said, if an employee changed his application once, that was acceptable. However, he questioned who would want to hire

an employee that required several opportunities to get it right.

Batty said the most difficult situations were when an applicant remembered prior duties or jobs only after filling out the forms. Corn asked why there was not a uniform policy for this type of situation, and Batty said there would likely be some opposition.

Gary Jones, executive director for the Oklahoma Public Employees Association, said there was a proliferation of unclassified positions and more agencies were “gaming” the system. Jones said there are agencies that use legislators to move people into unclassified positions.

“They can do things with unclassified positions that they can’t do with classified positions,” Jones said. “We believe that’s unfair.”

Jones added that many agencies used this move in the area of compensation, which allowed those with political clout to gain compensation through a loophole. Jones said this was not the initial purpose of the system.

*State offices will be
closed Thursday, January 1,
2004, in observance of
New Year's Day.*



Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., OPM Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration; state Representative John Carey (D-Durant), chair of the State Classification Task Force; Dayna R. Petete, OPM Assistant Administrator for Communications and Legislative Liaison; and Diane Haser-Bennett, OPM Assistant Administrator for Management Services.

Happy Holidays?

Robert Stevens, OPM

Normally, when I write an article, it is backed up with lots of studies and research. This article, however, I will try to approach just from the heart.

So many things have happened to all of us, whether it was the possibility of losing a job due to the financial situation in state government, a family member going to war, the loss of a loved one, a divorce or even a child having trouble in school.

As we go through this holiday season I hope you will take time to reflect on what you have versus what you don’t have. If you give something, give it from the heart, if you spend time with family and friends, take time to say “thank you” for being there. If you are unable this season to give a toy, money or even a can of food, what you can give someone is a hug, handshake, a kind word or even a “Hello” with a big beautiful smile. For some of us, going through our daily routine is difficult enough without adding holiday stress to it. We can wish for a lot of things, but sometimes we have all we need. Remember the simple things that you have experienced in your life—from Grandma baking that wonderful scratch cake, to mom baking sweet potato pie, to someone who cannot cook trying to make fudge, or even giving you the dreaded fruit cake. (By the way, you do not want to carry that through the airport!)

I guess what I am trying to say is go through this holiday season not thinking of what the wallet can bring, but instead what the heart can bring.

Always remember to be safe while shopping, be aware of your surroundings when going to and from your car at the mall or grocery store. Remember, friends / families don’t let friends / loved ones drive drunk. Always keep an eye on your stress level during the holiday season but most of all remember the things of the heart.



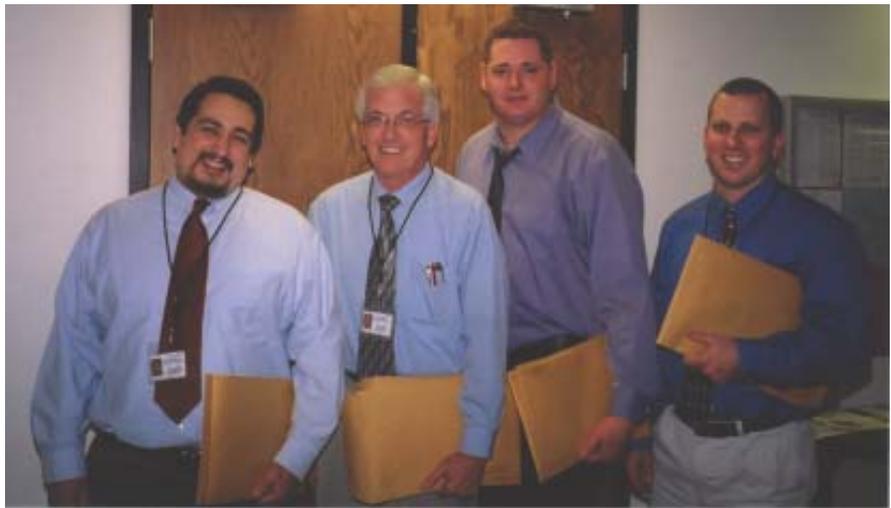
past summer, compared the salaries paid to the directors of both appropriated and nonappropriated state agencies to those of executives in both the public and private sector labor markets. The resulting report recommended adoption of a salary range structure for agency director salaries; pay adjustments, without additional funding from the Legislature, to the minimum of the pay range for agency directors whose current pay falls below the minimum; and establishment of an Oversight Committee to deal with administration of the system.

“Failure to deal appropriately with agency director pay can create salary compression problems, since the director’s salary often serves as a barrier to salary growth of subordinate managers and employees,” Jackson commented. “For this reason, OPM recommends that the Legislature adopt the recommendations in the January 2002, *Agency Director Compensation Report*, thus enabling the state to administer agency director pay in a manner that will ensure internal equity and external market competitiveness consistent with principles similar to those employed in the state classified pay system—a system that has been in place since 1982, and which serves 27,500 classified state employees.”

The only start-up cost associated with the creation of such a system is approximately \$564,285 (which includes mandatory retirement benefits and Social Security) necessary to adjust the pay of the 51 state agency directors whose current pay would fall below the minimum of the proposed pay bands.

OPM presented the *FY 04 Annual Compensation Report* to members of the Biennial Compensation Review Board on December 15. This Board was created during the 2003 legislative session to review the annual OPM compensation study and to make compensation adjustment recommendations.

The *FY 04 Annual Compensation Report* is available in its entirety on the OPM Website at <http://www.opm.state.ok.us/index.htm>.



Members of the OPM Compensation and Workforce Planning Team (l to r) James Perez; Tom Patt, Director; Everett Slavik; and Austin Gilley; on their way to the State Capitol to distribute copies of the FY 04 OPM Annual Compensation Report to the Governor and legislative leadership and staff.

Rules Update

Kimberlee Williams, OPM

OPM has several emergency rulemaking actions that have been completed in the last few months or are currently pending. Below is an update on the status of these emergency rulemaking actions as of December 17, 2003:

- Emergency amendments to clarify the reduction-in-force rules and to make them consistent with statutory changes have been in effect since October 22, 2003. These rules are included in Subchapter 13 of the Merit Rules available on the OPM Website (<http://www.opm.state.ok.us/opm-13.rtf> or <http://www.opm.state.ok.us/opm-13.pdf>).
- Emergency amendments to the Voluntary Payroll Deduction rules are pending approval of the Governor. These amendments make the rules consistent with recent statutory changes. The amendments include rules to implement the law permitting vendor access passed during the 2002 legislative session and amended last session.

In addition, OPM staff members are putting final touches on miscellaneous amendments to the Merit Rules. These amendments are intended to make the rules consistent with other statutory changes made last legislative session. We expect to file these emergency amendments with the

Governor by the end of the year.

State agencies will be notified when the Governor takes action on OPM rule proposals via *All Appointing Authorities* Memorandum and through the OPM Website. The Merit Rules on the OPM Website will be amended to include emergency amendments that become effective.

OPM is also beginning work on permanent amendments to the Merit Rules and the Voluntary Payroll Deduction Rules. These proposals will include currently-effective emergency amendments, as well as other proposed changes. The rule proposals will be distributed to state agencies by *All Appointing Authorities Memorandum* and will be posted on the OPM Website.

A public rules hearing will be held most likely in February or March 2004. A specific date and time will be announced at a later date.



The Second Session of the 49th Oklahoma Legislature convenes at noon on Monday, February 2, 2004.

Happy New Year!

Biennial Compensation Review Board Discusses State Classified Compensation

Tom Patt, OPM

The Biennial Compensation Review Board, established earlier this year in accordance with Enrolled Senate Bill 194, has now met twice: October 23, 2003 and December 15, 2003. The Board is composed of two members from the House of Representatives (Rep. Danny Morgan and Rep. Ron Peterson), two members from the Senate (Sen. Jay Paul Gumm and Sen. Jonathan Nichols), two members appointed by the Governor (Albert Smith, Department of Human Services Human Resources Director, and Ronald Wilson, Oklahoma Health Care Authority Human Resources Director) and a representative from the Oklahoma Public Employees Association (Gary Jones, Executive Director). The purpose of the Board is to review OPM's Annual Compensation Report and make recommendations regarding compensation adjustments to the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Governor.

During the first meeting, Tom Patt, OPM Director of Compensation and Workforce Planning, gave a presentation to the Board on the state of Oklahoma's compensation system. The presentation focused on the history of the compensation system, including changes made by the Classification and Compensation Reform Act (CCRA); the history of general pay increases granted by the legislature since 1992; the effect of pay movement mechanisms authorized by CCRA on state compensation; and

information contained in the Annual Compensation Report. The Board also used this first meeting as an organizational meeting, electing Sen. Jay Paul Gumm as chairman of the Board.

During the second meeting, the Board reviewed the analysis and conclusions in the FY 04 Annual Compensation Report. After the review, the Board tasked OPM Compensation staff with providing supplemental analysis and a draft report from the Board to the Legislature. This information will be considered at the final meeting of the Board on Tuesday, January 6, 2003.

Interim Study Committee Considers Paid Family Leave

Tom Patt, OPM

The Oklahoma Legislature is currently examining the topic of paid family leave as an interim study. The first meeting of the Study Committee was held on October 23, 2003. Senator Bernest Cain, Committee chair, set the tone for the meeting by inviting participants from both sides of the issue to openly and candidly express their views. Among those addressing employee concerns were the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy and the Community Assistance Project, among others. Those presenting the employer viewpoint included

Paid Family Leave, continued on page 6

ICE Update

Natasha Riley, OPM

On November 3, 2003, the Mid-America Technology Center in Wayne, Oklahoma, was the first remote testing site to administer Merit System tests in the Integrated Computerized Examination (ICE) System.

This new system allows applicants to take a Merit System exam on a computer and get the results immediately after answering the last question. Also, applicants testing in ICE go on the register for that job on the same day they tested, usually just a few minutes after completing the test. When taking a pencil and paper test, an applicant waits two days to be placed on the register and four days to receive test results in the mail. (Applicants still receive a letter in the mail informing them of their test scores, their final earned ratings, and their rankings on the registers.)

Debbie Doty monitors Merit System testing at Mid-America Technology Center. Ms. Doty administered three tests on the first day and since then has administered 12 more in ICE. Ms. Doty said the ICE System makes test administration much easier for her, and the applicants appreciate the instant feedback the system gives them.

Other remote testing sites that have agreed to go online with ICE are the Pontotoc Technology Center in Ada, the Southern Oklahoma Technology Center in Ardmore, the Caddo-Kiowa Technology Center in Fort Cobb, the Pioneer Technology Center in Ponca City, and the Employment Service Commission One-Stop Career Center in Tulsa.

OPM implemented the ICE System on
ICE, continued on page 6



Ron Wilson, Human Resources Director for the Oklahoma Health Care Authority and Governor's appointee to the Oklahoma Biennial Compensation Review Board; Diane Haser-Bennett, OPM Assistant Administrator for Management Services; Tom Patt, OPM Director of Compensation and Workforce Planning; and Al Smith, Human Resources Director for the Department of Human Services and Governor's appointee to the Oklahoma Biennial Compensation Review Board.

Paid Family Leave, continued from page 5

the State Chamber of Commerce, General Motors Corporation, and BancFirst. All participants expressed empathy with the underlying problems of maintaining a balance between work and family life.

The second meeting of the Study Committee was on November 18, 2003. Lissa Bell from the National Partnership for Women and Families gave a thorough review of the approaches and best practices adopted by other states in the area of paid family leave. Ms. Bell reported that 28 states have introduced paid leave legislation. She pointed out that 80 percent of employers who have some form of income replacement program have found that the benefits outweigh costs. She said that 90 percent report a neutral or positive effect on profitability and growth. When asked by the Committee if large employers appeared to be resistant to paid leave, she indicated that that was not her impression.

Tom Patt, OPM Director of Compensation and Workforce Planning, gave an overview of the state's leave sharing program, which has proven to be a viable approach to providing income to employees who are undergoing family emergencies. Scott Barger and Gary Jones of the Oklahoma Public Employees Association provided the OPEA perspective on the need for paid family leave in state government service. They expressed their support for paid leave and indicated their interest in proposing a pilot program of paid leave for the state.

The State Chamber of Commerce Human Resources Committee presented a private sector viewpoint, urging that caution be applied in levying a mandatory paid leave on employers, who are trying their best to accommodate employee needs while preserving the viability of their businesses. Sen. Cain adjourned the meeting by expressing his appreciation to all in attendance and stating that this would be the final meeting and that all comments and presentations would be taken under advisement.

Kudos!

*Everett Slavik
Office of Personnel Management
has received the designation
"Certified Personnel Professional".*

Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., OPM Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration (right) and Oscar Quiroga, chair of the Governor's Advisory Council on Latin-American and Hispanic Affairs (left) met with Governor Brad Henry on December 19 regarding the work of the Council.



ICE, continued from page 5

January 22, 2003. At that time, three tests covering 15 job families were released in the ICE system for applicant testing. Currently, 75 tests are released in the ICE System. Applicants have taken over 7,500 tests in the new system.

Questions about the ICE System may be directed to Natasha Riley, Director of Personnel Assessment, at natasha.riley@opm.state.ok.us.



On December 1, 2003, OPM Team member Lezlie Thiery (center) resigned after 15 years of employment with OPM. For nearly two years, Ms. Thiery served as Human Resources Lead for the CORE Oklahoma Project for PeopleSoft Implementation. On December 2, 2003, Oleda E. Hicks (left), Department of Human Services, was appointed to serve as OPM Human Resources Lead for the CORE Project. Oleda Hicks has been employed by the State of Oklahoma since 1988. She initially worked for the State Insurance Fund (1988), and the Office of Personnel Management (1988 - 1989), before joining the Department of Human Services (DHS) in 1989, where she has worked in the Human Resources Management Division in a variety of positions for over 14 years. Pictured with Ms. Hicks and Ms. Thiery is (right) Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., OPM Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration.

OPM Hosts CPM Executive Development Seminar

Carrie Rohr, OPM

Thirty-one Certified Public Manager (CPM) candidates participated in the Executive Development Seminar held October 21 - 24 at Western Hills State Lodge.

The participants were divided into four groups that worked to prepare a task force report on how to improve state government in the areas of Safety and Security, Commerce and Tourism, Finance and Revenue, and Health.

These reports will be sent to the Governor and members of his Cabinet. Each group worked with a facilitator who assisted them in the process. This year's facilitators were Pamela Freeman and Patricia Anderson, Department of Human Services; Jeff Gifford, Office of Juvenile Affairs; and Joyce Smith, OPM.

In addition, participants attended workshops related to the Myers Briggs Type Inventory, dealing with the media, and dealing with difficult people. Speakers for the seminar included Gayla Sherry, Kerry Robertson, and Mark Jones.

One of the highlights of the seminar is building a tower with only newspaper and masking tape. This exercise demonstrates the different personality types and how they relate in a team environment.

The Executive Development Seminar is the capstone of the Oklahoma CPM program. For more information regarding the CPM program, please contact Carrie Rohr, Director of OPM's Human Resource Development Services Division, at (405) 521-6344, or carrie.rohr@opm.state.ok.us.



Executive Development Seminar participants included (front row, l to r) Jody Harlan, Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS); Ade Abioye, Department of Human Services (DHS); Lisa Knauf, Conservation Commission; Jackie Whiteacre, DHS; Mark Briscoe, Oklahoma Tax Commission (OTC); Mary Hanson, OTC; Carol Dodge, Oklahoma Housing Finance Authority; Tawanna White, Department of Public Safety; Pam Jenkins, DHS; (second row, l to r) Sandy Humphrey, Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department; Tammy Robinson, Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT); Maleatha Patterson, DHS; Janet Hailey, DHS; Verla Kirk, DHS; Mitch Richardson, ODOT; Sara Jordan, Oklahoma Military Department; Jeff Hoogendoorn, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ); Saba Tahmassibi, DEQ; Leann Reynolds, OTC; (third row, l to r) Michelle Smith, DHS; Jimmy Martin, Department of Corrections (DOC); Chris Sutterfield, Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training; Susan Dozal, Board of Pharmacy; Shawn Fipps, ODOT; Sheila Adkins, State Auditor and Inspector; Rosalyn Jacquett, Corporation Commission; (fourth row, l to r) Earl Merriman, DHS; Stan Greene, ODOT; Susan Bohl, DHS; Eddie Sils, ODOT; and Jasper Harrison, ODOT.

ASE Update

Kimberlee Williams, OPM

Staff members of OPM and the Oklahoma Merit Protection Commission (MPC) are nearing completion of an update to the *Agency Self-Evaluation of HR Management Practices and Agency Human Resource Management Plan (Agency Self-Evaluation)*.

The *Agency Self-Evaluation* is, in essence, a checklist that agencies can use to determine whether they are in compliance with state and federal laws affecting human resources, in order to discover and correct deficiencies (if any). This may lead to an improved human resources function for the agency, and can even reduce the agency's legal liability in certain circumstances. The Agency Human Resource Management Plan portion of the *Agency Self-Evaluation* is intended to assist agencies in developing a plan to bring the agency into compliance if any deficiencies were noted, and also to consider the development of new policies or programs that may be beneficial to the agency.

OPM and MPC are considering several changes to the *Agency Self-Evaluation* to make it easier to read, more visually attractive, and to enable it to be easily posted on Websites maintained by OPM and MPC. Another change under consideration is to provide the *Agency Self-Evaluation* in both hard-copy format and an electronic format that can be completed on the computer for agencies having Microsoft Word software.

The *Agency Self-Evaluation* is a past recipient of the National Association of State Personnel Executives' Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Award for Innovative State Human Resource Management Programs, and a Governor's Commendation Award.



For information regarding weather-related state office closings, log onto www.youroklahoma.com.

Jackson Receives Asia Society Award

During the 15th annual presentation of the Asia Society of Oklahoma *Awards for Excellence* on November 15, 2003, Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., OPM Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration, was recognized as an *Outstanding Civic Leader* along with Oklahoma Lt. Governor Mary Fallin and Dr. Kuang-Hua Chang, Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering, University of Oklahoma.

Dr. Chang was honored for his work on behalf of individuals with disabilities—in 1999, Dr. Chang and his students designed and built a special walker that assisted a three-year-old Norman boy in exercising his paralyzed legs. In 2001, they built a special baby crib to help a disabled mother in Norman take care of her newborn baby. And, in 2003, he and his students modified a shopping cart at the Pratt's store in Tecumseh to help a young mother take her disabled son with her when she shops for groceries.

The Asia Society of Oklahoma, which was organized in 1985, presents the *Awards for Excellence* “recognizing the most outstanding contributions to furthering a cultural, civic and business partnership in the quest for a higher quality of life.”



Ms. Vasithy Sengdara, Awards for Excellence Dinner Committee co-chair and a member of the Governor's Advisory Council on Asian-American Affairs (which is staffed by OPM) presents an "Outstanding Civic Leader" award to Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., OPM Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration.



Outstanding Civic Leader award recipients (above, l to r) Lt. Governor Mary Fallin; Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., OPM Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration; and Dr. Kuang-Hua Chang, Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering, University of Oklahoma.

It is comprised of the Chinese Association of Greater Oklahoma City, India Association of Oklahoma, Indonesian American Association of Oklahoma, Iranian American Cultural Society of Oklahoma, Japan American Society of Oklahoma, Korean Society of Oklahoma, Laotian Women Association of Oklahoma, Philippine American Civic Organization of Oklahoma, Sao-Viet (Vietnamese) Association, and Taiwanese Association of Oklahoma.

Other award recipients included Japan Society of Oklahoma—*Outstanding Member Organization*; Mrs. Spring Nguyen, a long-time employee of the Oklahoma State Senate—*Outstanding Individual Award*; Super Cao Nguyen—*Outstanding Corporate Support*; and Philippine American Civic Organization of Oklahoma, Taiwanese Association of Oklahoma, and Chinese Association of Greater Oklahoma City—*Performing Arts*. In addition, the Asia Society presented numerous scholarship awards to Oklahoma high school and college students.



Mr. Jackson accepts his award.

In addition to members of Mr. Jackson's family, several OPM Team members represented OPM at the awards presentation: Hank Batty, OPM Deputy Administrator for Programs; Janet Anderson, Executive Assistant to Mr. Jackson; Dayna R. Petete, OPM Assistant Administrator for Communications and Legislative Liaison; Herman Johnson, OPM Targeted Minority Recruitment Coordinator; and Brenda Thornton, Director of OPM's Office of Equal Opportunity and Workforce Diversity.



Twenty-four employees from 18 state agencies attended the Certified Personnel Professional (CPP) Training course November 4 - 7, 2003. CPP instructors included Dayna Petete, Brenda Thornton, Carrie Robr, Hank Batty, James Perez, Natasha Riley, David Hays, Kimberlee Williams, and Tom Patt, OPM; Jack Dobbins, Oklahoma Tax Commission; and Dr. Robert Mathis, author of "Human Resource Management," the textbook for the course. Pictured (left) is Hank Batty, OPM Deputy Administrator for Programs (standing); and (l to r) Linda Grigsby, Pardon and Parole Board; and Karen Gray, Oklahoma State Department of Health; and (below, l to r) Leigh Newby, Department of Public Safety; and Carrie Robr, OPM.

Council Establishes 1st Annual Senator Keith Leftwich Award

Yolanda Charney, Member

Governor's Advisory Council on Latin-American and Hispanic Affairs

On October 27, the Governor's Advisory Council on Latin-American and Hispanic Affairs presented the first annual *Senator Keith Leftwich Legislative Amistad Award* posthumously to the late Senator Keith Leftwich, who passed away on September 19, 2003. Senator Leftwich was the sponsor of Senate Bill 596, allowing in-state college tuition to all deserving Oklahoma high school graduates. Senate Bill 596 was passed during the 2003 legislative session and signed by Governor Brad Henry on May 12, 2003. Mrs. Debbe Leftwich accepted the award on behalf of her late husband.



The Council also presented *Certificates of Appreciation* to legislators who have been instrumental in passing legislation that has improved the quality of life for Oklahoma Hispanics: Senator Penny Williams, Senator Charles Ford, Senator Bernest Cain, Senator Mike Fair, Representative Kevin Calvey, Representative Al Lindley, Representative Mike Tyler, Representative Darrell Gilbert, and former Senator Enoch Kelly Haney.

According to Oscar Quiroga, Chair of the Governor's Council *Leftwich Award*, continued on page 10



Pictured (standing, l to r): Juanita Salazar Lamb, Governor's Advisory Council on Latin-American and Hispanic Affairs; Council member Giovanni Perry; Council member Yolanda Charney; Rep. Darrell Gilbert; former Senator Kelly Haney; Debbe Leftwich; Rep. Kevin Calvey; Senator Penny Williams; Rep. Al Lindley; Council member Teri Mora; Council member Guillermo Rojas; and (seated) Council chair Oscar Quiroga.

on Latin-American and Hispanic Affairs, “the title *Legislative Amistad Award* was chosen because *Amistad* is the Spanish word for friendship, characterizing the relationship between the recognized legislators and Oklahoma’s Hispanic Community.”

Governor Frank Keating created the Governor’s Advisory Council on Latin-American and Hispanic Affairs to provide advice regarding the development and implementation of policies, plans, and programs relating to the special needs of Hispanics. This Council also makes a concerted effort toward increasing statewide public awareness of problems surrounding Hispanics and expands opportunities for Oklahoma Hispanics in education, employment, health, housing, culture, and recreation. Governor Henry re-created the Council through Executive Order 2003-07.

OPM’s Office of Equal Opportunity and Workforce Diversity provides staff support to the Council.

Legislation Recommended By Task Force

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12/11/03 Capitol Network News*

On December 11, the Electronic Information and Technology Accessibility Task Force agreed to a draft bill proposing a means for the state to become compliant with federal accessibility laws.

The measure, to be authored by Rep. Abe Deuschendorf, D-Lawton, and Sen. Gilmer Capps, D-Snyder, would require the Information Services Division (ISD) of the Office of State Finance and the Department of Central Services (DCS) to work together to assure state compliance regarding accessibility of information technology for individuals with disabilities. The standards would be based on the provisions of Section 508 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

Section 1 of the bill states, “When developing, procuring, maintaining or using information technology, or when administering contracts or grants that include the procurement, development, upgrading, or

Legislation, continued on page 11

Senator Debbe Leftwich Sworn In

Senate Communications Division, December 15, 2003

State Senator Debbe Leftwich is officially on the job. On December 15, Leftwich was sworn in as the newest member of the Oklahoma State Senate.

The South Oklahoma City Democrat won the seat in a special election December 9, succeeding her husband Keith who lost his battle with cancer in September.

Family members, friends and supporters looked on while State Supreme Court Justice Marian Opala administered the oath of office to Senator Leftwich during a ceremony in the senate chamber.

“I want to thank my sons, Kevin and Kurt, our friends, neighbors and so many others who helped ensure I would be able to finish Keith’s work here in at the Capitol. With the help of the people of District 44, I know we can accomplish great things,” said Senator Leftwich, D-OKC.

Senator Cal Hobson has already tapped Leftwich to serve on several key committees, including Business and Labor, Transportation, General Government and Transportation Subcommittee on Appropriations, Human Resources, Aerospace and Technology, and Veterans, Military Affairs and Public Safety.

“Debbe Leftwich has years of public service in her own right, chairing the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women and serving in many other civic and political organizations. We know she’s not afraid of hard work or tough issues. I’m confident she’ll be an extremely effective senator,” said Hobson.

Constituents who want to visit with Senator Leftwich will not find it difficult to locate her. She’ll be moving into her late husband’s office at the State Capitol, in room 427A. Long-time executive assistant Jeri Holland will remain to assist Senator Leftwich. The phone number, 405-521-5557, is also the same.

“I am honored that the people of District 44 have entrusted me to carry on Keith’s work on their behalf. He loved his community, his state and his country. Oklahoma is a better place for Keith’s service, and it is a privilege to continue on that path,” said Leftwich.

Editor’s Note: Debbe Leftwich is chair of the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women, which is staffed by OPM’s Office of Equal Opportunity and Workforce Diversity, and former Director of Administration and Personnel for the Board of Medicolegal Investigations..



*Oklahoma Supreme Court Justice Marian Opala administers the oath of office to Senator Debbe Leftwich while her father, Dave McLain (center), holds the Bible.
(Photo courtesy of the Oklahoma State Senate.)*

Legislation, continued from page 10

replacing of information technology each state agency shall ensure, unless an undue burden would be imposed on the agency, that the information technology allows employees, program participants, and members of the general public access to use of information and data that is comparable to the access by individuals without disabilities.”

The measure defines undue burden as “significant difficulty or expense, including, but not limited to, difficulty or expense associated with technical feasibility.”

All state agencies, excluding common education and local and municipal governments, would be required to follow the standards develop by ISD and DCS. The measure would also create the Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Advisory Council. The council’s main charge would be to make recommendations concerning the accessibility for the disabled to publicly produce and provide electronic information technology and to provide advice and assistance to ISD on the development of standards.

The council would be composed of the same members currently serving on the task force.

DCS will also develop a procurement clause to be used in the purchase of any new technology by every agency defined in the measure.

A final report on the findings of the task force will be filed with the Legislature along with the final draft of the proposed bill.

Kudos

*to Oscar B. Jackson, Jr.,
OPM Administrator and Cabinet
Secretary of Human Resources
and Administration, on his
reappointment to the Executive
Council of the International
Public Management Association
for Human Resources as
the state human resource
director representative!*



Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., OPM Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration (left), was the keynote speaker for the 2003 Department of Corrections Longevity Awards Program, which was held December 2, at the Canadian Valley Technology Center in El Reno. Pictured with Mr. Jackson are (second from left to right): Ted Logan, member, Board of Corrections; Ron Ward, Director, Oklahoma Department of Corrections; William R. Robinson, Correctional Security Officer III, Jackie Brannon Correctional Center, McAlester, OK, who was honored for 39 years of service to the state of Oklahoma; Bobby Boone, Deputy Director, Eastern Region; and John Grubbs, Warden, Jackie Brannon Correctional Center, McAlester.

Education Department, Chamber of Commerce Release Guidebook for Business on Employment of People with Disabilities

U.S. Department of Education
October 31, 2003

In recognition of National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2003, the U.S. Department of Education, in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, on October 31 released a guidebook to acquaint business leaders with programs and resources available to assist them in hiring people with disabilities.

The jointly developed publication, “Disability Employment 101: Learn to Tap Your ‘HIRE’ Potential,” includes information about how to find qualified workers with disabilities, how to put disability and employment research into practice and how to model what other businesses have done to successfully integrate individuals with disabilities into the workforce.

“People with disabilities, particularly those with severe disabilities, represent an often-untapped group of educated, highly

skilled, talented and qualified workers,” U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige said. “At the Department of Education, our Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services administers several programs that support the goal of finding competitive, meaningful, integrated employment for people with disabilities.

“We are proud to highlight these resources and our partnerships with private employers, state governments, community-based organizations and others who, like the chamber, are working with us toward this important employment goal,” Paige said.

Among other things, the 56-page guide provides information regarding department-funded vocational rehabilitation agen-

Employment Guide, continued on page 13

Agency HR Changes Since October 2003

Department of Environmental Quality

*Susan Loftin
HR Programs Manager
Resigned*

Department of Human Services

*Oleda Hicks
Human Resources Lead—CORE Oklahoma
Office of Personnel Management*

*Tamara Steele
HR Management Specialist III
Tulsa Office*

*Roger Scott
Personnel Manager I*

Office of Personnel Management

*Juan Benavidez
Converted from CAPIP Executive Fellow to
Human Resources Management Specialist*

*Jamie Culp
Human Resources Management Specialist
Employee Selection Services
Resigned*

*Debra Davis
Administrative Technician
Management Services*

*Amanda Dean
Administrative Technician
Employee Selection Services*

*Austin Gilley
CAPIP Executive Fellow
Management Services*

*Connie Hollins
Human Resources Management Specialist
Retired*

*Linda Roe
Accountant
Financial Management Services*

Oklahoma Bureau of Investigation

*Charlotte Goebel
Retired*

*Susan Loftin
HR Programs Manager III*

Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board

*Linda Grigsby
Acting Business Manager*

*Clarica Wall
Business Manager
Retired*

Oklahoma Real Estate Commission

*Lisa Hays
Personnel/Business Manager*

*Ray Schellenger
Personnel/Business Manager
Retired*

OPM Committee Calendar

Affirmative Action Review Council

*9/15/04, 10/20/04, 11/17/04,
12/15/04, 1/19/05—8:30 a.m.
Department of Agriculture*

CPM Advisory Board

Meets at the call of the chair

Child Day Care

Advisory Committee

Meets at the call of the chair

OPM State EAP Advisory Council

*1/28/04—10:00 a.m.
419-B State Capitol
4/28/04, 7/28/04
10/27/04—10:00 a.m.
Locations TBA*

Governor's Advisory Council on Asian-American Affairs

*1/30/04, 4/30/04, 7/30/04,
10/29/04—2:00 p.m.
Office of Personnel Management
Conference Room G-91*

Governor's Advisory Council on Latin-American & Hispanic Affairs

*1/26/04, 4/26/04,
7/26/04, 10/25/04—2:00 p.m.
Office of Personnel Management
Conference Room G-91*

Committee for Incentive Awards for State Employees

Meets at the call of the chair

Mentor Selection

Advisory Committee

Meets at the call of the chair

State Agency Review Committee

*2/11/04, 5/12/04,
8/11/04, 11/10/04—2:30 p.m.
Office of Personnel Management
Conference Room G-91*

Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women

*1/29/04, 2/26/04, 3/25/04,
4/29/03, 5/27/03—1:30 p.m.
419C State Capitol
8/26/04, 9/30/04,
10/28/04, 11/18/04—1:30 p.m.
Office of Personnel Management*

Note: Calendar subject to change. Call (405) 521-2177 for most recent information concerning OPM Advisory Bodies and other entities staffed by OPM.

For agendas, log onto the OPM Website at www.opm.state.ok.us and open the "OPM Advisory Body Meetings" link under "Quick Links."

3A Memos Since October 2003

OPM 03-46 (12/11/03)

State Agency Services During Hazardous Weather

OPM 03-45 (12/05/03)

OPM FY 2004 Annual Compensation Report

OPM 03-44 (11/24/03)

Employee Service Rating (PMP) Compliance Form

OPM 03-43 (11/18/03)

Proposed Emergency Amendments to Merit Rules

OPM 03-42 (11/14/03)

State Agency Hiring Freeze

OPM 03-41 (11/07/03)

Delayed Payroll Processing

OPM 03-40 (10/28/03)

*Emergency Amendments to the Merit Rules
Regarding Reductions-In-Force*

OPM 03-39 (10/15/03)

*Incorporating Skill-Based Pay Differentials
into Base Pay*

Attorney General Opinions

03-041 (10/8/03)

(1) A state employee is entitled to receive longevity pay and retention points for prior, non-consecutive periods of service. A State employee does not lose credit for longevity pay or retention points because of retirement if the employee returns to work for the State; (2) A State employee does not lose credit for longevity pay or retention points because of a break in service of more than thirty days. However, if an employee has a break in service of more than thirty days he or she must requalify for longevity pay by working for two continuous years without a break in service; (3) Once a State employee is eligible to receive longevity pay pursuant to 74-840-2.18, the amount of longevity pay he or she receives is based upon all qualifying cumulative periods of service throughout the employee's career with the State, even if such periods of service are non-consecutive; (4) The amount of retention points a person receives is based upon all qualifying cumulative periods of service throughout the employee's career with the State, even if such periods of service are non-consecutive, and even if the periods of service do not count toward the employee's eligibility to receive longevity pay.

Executive Orders

2003-22 (9/3/03)

Revoking Executive Order DB #3—State Budget Law—Certification and Submission of Payrolls for Payment

2003-27 (11/10/03)

Hiring Freeze

2003-29 (12/9/03)

Revoke Executive Order 1999-06 and appoint the Commissioner of the Oklahoma Department of Public Safety to serve as Governor's designee for authorizing agencies to maintain minimum services when hazardous weather becomes a safety threat, causes undue delays or prohibits employees from traveling to and from work.



Individuals receiving certificates included (above, l to r) Joan Barnett, Department of Human Services (DHS), Cheryl O'Rourke, Oklahoma Transportation Authority; John White, Department of Transportation; Peggy Carter, Department of Corrections; Phyllis Bennett, DHS; Nancy Ellis, DHS; Jamie Fannin, Department of Environmental Quality; (right, l to r) Sherry Dowe, DHS; Charlotte Wyatt, DHS; R. Charles Smith, Health Department; Dr. Sherleen H. Jackson, DHS; Ray Turner, Department of Rehabilitation Services; Elizabeth Fine, DHS; and Barbara Williams, Oklahoma Employment Security Commission.



On October 24, 2003, the Oklahoma Alliance for Civil Rights, Inc., presented "Looking at a New Paradigm: Macro & Micro Cultures in the Workplace—Can't we all just get along?" and Awards Luncheon. During the luncheon, the Alliance presented certificates on behalf of OPM to individuals who had achieved "Senior Certification" or "Certification" status as investigators of complaints of discrimination as required by the Oklahoma Personnel Act and the Merit Rules.

Employment Guide, continued from page 11

cies, Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers, and Centers for Independent Living. It also includes checklists and various other resources to aid employers as they prepare to employ people with disabilities.

During National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2002, the Education Department and the chamber's Center for Workforce Preparation began development of the booklet. A partnership was established to produce the document as a means to acquaint employers with the programs available at the department and the chamber that can help businesses employ people with disabilities.

"Disability Employment 101: Learn to Tap Your 'HIRE' Potential" is posted on the department's web site at www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/products/employmentguide/.

Copies also will be available soon through the department's "ED Pubs" service on the Web at <http://www.edpubs.org/> or by phoning 1-877-4-ED-PUBS, faxing 1-301-470-1244 or writing ED Pubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, Md. 20794-1398.

Questions or comments about the "HR Exchange"? Articles/topics you'd like to see? Contact the Editor at dayna.petete@opm.state.ok.us.

Outstanding graduate and undergraduate students are available to hire through the Carl Albert Public Internship Program. Contact Dayna Petete, at (405) 521-6293, or dayna.petete@opm.state.ok.us.

HRDS Offers New Courses

The Human Resource Development Services (HRDS) Spring Semester begins on March 8. New courses include

- *Managing a Multi-Generation Workforce,*
- *Dealing with Difficult People,* and
- *Living Paycheck to Paycheck.*

Trainers from the Oklahoma State Department of Health and HRDS staff members will teach these courses.

In addition, Norma Goff, Department of Human Services, will teach *Developing Effective Negotiation Skills* during the Spring semester.

The Fall 2003 semester ended December 19. The Spring 2004 semester will end June 18. Call HRDS at (405) 521-2166 for information regarding Spring 2004 courses.

OPM State EAP Issues FY 03 Report

Robert Stevens, OPM

This month, the OPM State Employee Assistance Program (EAP) submitted the *FY 03 State Employee Assistance Program Annual Report* to Governor Henry, President Pro Tempore Cal Hobson, and Speaker of the House Larry Adair. According to the report, during FY 03, OPM State EAP Team members assisted 237 individuals—23 percent were supervisors and 77 percent were non-supervisors. Eighty-two percent of these clients were from the Oklahoma City area; seven percent from Tulsa; three percent from Lawton; one percent from Muskogee; and eight percent from other areas of the state.

Out of 237 referrals made during FY 03, 119 were for work-related problems; 172 were related to family conflict or parent/child problems; 77 were for marital problems; and 81 were for mental health or alcohol/drug problems. Thirty-five percent of the participants were self-referred, 21 percent were referred by a supervisor, 25 percent by family members, ten percent by co-workers, one percent by a medical/mental health professional, and nine percent by other sources. During FY 03, the OPM State EAP provided 2,564 actual clock hours of direct services—73 percent were for EAP

counseling. [Note: Some clients were multiple referrals and are counted for each referral.]

In a letter to the Governor and legislative leadership that accompanied the report, Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., OPM Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration, noted that “[l]ike other public sector programs in Oklahoma, [the OPM State EAP] faced the daunting task of seeing the need for its services increase at the same time its resources decreased. As employees throughout Oklahoma turned to EAP for assistance in dealing with the fears and difficulties accompanying tight budgets, the EAP staff had its own share of challenges. Cell phones were turned in, professional development requiring travel was deferred and the staff made contingency plans for schedules to provide continued client access in the event of furloughs or reductions-in-force.”

“Acknowledging the importance of the EAP during this critical time,” Jackson continued, “we elected to exempt employees of the EAP from staff reductions made elsewhere in the agency. Cuts were made,

EAP Annual Report, continued on page 15

OPM Says “Thank You” to Training Partner

Dayna R. Petete, OPM

On December 2, 2003, Brenda Thornton, OPM Director of Equal Opportunity and Workforce Diversity, presented a special commendation, requested by Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., OPM Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration, from Governor Brad Henry to the Oklahoma Alliance for Civil Rights, Inc. R. Charles Smith, Civil Rights Administrator for the Oklahoma State Department of Health, and president of the Alliance, accepted the award on behalf of the organization.



Brenda Thornton and R. Charles Smith

The Alliance assists OPM in providing training for all individuals who investigate complaints of employment discrimination in executive branch agencies. State law requires these individuals to complete four days of initial discrimination complaints investigator training, a minimum of one investigation under the guidance of a senior Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) investigator, and a minimum of six hours of classroom instruction or 0.6 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) in training each calendar year.

The Alliance is composed of individuals in the public and private sectors employed in the areas of personnel, affirmative action and/or EEO. Members assist and support affirmative action and EEO personnel by, among other things, serving as a network for professional information and development in the area of EEO and affirmative action.



On December 5, 2003, the Oklahoma Society of Certified Public Managers (OSCPM) named Mary Wilson (center), Oklahoma Tax Commission, 2003 OSCP M of the Year. Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., OPM Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration (left), presented Ms. Wilson with her award and a certificate signed by Governor Brad Henry declaring December 5, 2003, “Mary Wilson Day” in the state of Oklahoma. Pictured with Ms. Wilson and Mr. Jackson is OSCP M President Judy Dennis, Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

however, to the EAP budget. Even if no employees were affected directly, these cuts threatened to curtail our ability to provide critical EAP services. Fortunately, the effects of the cuts were reduced by the ingenuity of the EAP staff. Acting on the initiative of EAP Director Robert Stevens, OPM entered into a partnership with the Oklahoma City Housing Authority to provide EAP services. The contract was a classic example of “win-win” negotiating, permitting EAP to maintain the state vehicles so critical to delivering its services statewide while providing the Oklahoma City Housing Authority services at a cost far below what they had paid to a private provider.”

“We are hopeful,” Jackson concluded, that the worst of the budget crisis is past. Nevertheless, the same adversity that emphasized the need for a professional approach for our employees who face personal, financial, or workplace difficulties that threaten our ability to provide state services also gave the EAP staff the opportunity to demonstrate their creativity, industry, and dedication to their profession. We at OPM will continue to build upon this foundation as we strive to “serve the people of Oklahoma by delivering reliable and innovative human resource services to our partner agencies to achieve their missions.”

In 1988, Governor Henry Bellmon created the EAP within OPM by Executive Order; the Legislature made the OPM State EAP a statutory program in 1992. Initially, the OPM State EAP was created to provide assistance to state agencies in establishing work-related stress-prevention procedures.

The OPM State EAP, which is voluntary, provides assistance to state agencies in their management of employees whose personal problems may have a negative impact on job performance. The OPM State EAP also assists employees and their family members who are seeking corrective help with medical or mental health problems, including alcohol or drug abuse, and emotional, marital, familial, financial, or other personal problems.

Specifically, the OPM State EAP provides: **Referral Services** (maintaining contacts with community service providers for the purpose of networking and coordinating services to state agencies and employ-

ees); **Education/Training** (focusing attention on the personal concerns of employees that have a negative impact on productivity, while generating awareness of the EAP as a source of assistance. EAP Team members conduct classes on *Managing the Troubled Employee, Stress Management*, and mandatory drug and alcohol training); **Counseling** (resolving problems related to alcohol or drug abuse and emotional, marital, family, mental health, financial, and other personal problems, while developing short- and long-term goals); and **Critical Incident Debriefing** (providing crisis intervention to agencies for troubled employees and their family members by offering professional emergency services).

Members of the OPM State EAP Team include Robert Stevens, EAP Coordinator; Warren Thompson and Deanna Miller, EAP Representatives; and Blanche Longoria, Administrative Assistant.



On December 16, 2003, Ron Wilson, HR Director of the Oklahoma Health Care Authority and president of the Oklahoma Public Human Resources Association (OPHRA), presented Diane Haser-Bennett, OPM Assistant Administrator for Management Services, with a plaque commemorating her “outstanding service and dedication” as 2002 - 2003 OPHRA president. The presentation was made during the OPHRA Holiday Training Conference, which was held at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art. Pictured behind Mr. Wilson and Ms. Haser-Bennett is the 55 feet tall glass tower created by world-renowned artist Dale Chihuly for the museum. Occupying a three-story atrium at the main museum entrance, the tower is composed of 2,400 hand-blown glass parts.

DOL Offers Tips for Planning Safe Holiday Celebrations

Reprinted with permission
12/12/03 IPMA-HR Bulletin

The Department of Labor’s *Working Partners for an Alcohol- and Drug-Free Workplace* program has a special web page (http://www.dol.gov/asp/programs/drugs/workingpartners/sp_iss/idhome.asp) that addresses steps employers can take during the holiday season to prevent impaired driving in their communities and send their employees a safe and sober message about workplace parties and drinking.

By visiting the program’s website and selecting “Impaired Driving” under “Special Issues,” employers can learn about several measures they can take to minimize any negative consequences of alcohol consumption, including tips for planning workplace celebrations.

The website includes information about holiday-season and year-round impaired driving prevention initiatives, alcohol traffic safety facts, myths and facts about alcohol and driving, and state laws on impaired driving.

The department developed the **Working Partners** initiative to help raise awareness about the impact drugs and alcohol have on the workplace and provide information on how to establish drug-free workplace programs that protect worker safety and health.

Government Recognizes Healthy Workplaces

Reprinted with permission
12/12/03 IPMA-HR Bulletin

The Department of Health and Human Services announced the winners of the first Innovation in Prevention Awards, which recognize efforts to promote healthy lifestyles in workplaces and communities.

“These awardees go above and beyond the call of duty to promote healthy lifestyles in their communities,” HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson said. “We are working from coast to coast to build a healthier, stronger America, and these efforts start at the local level. To promote healthier

Healthy Workplaces, continued on page 16

lifestyles, we need to reach Americans in the places they work, play and go to school. We have no better partners than these eight organizations.”

To be considered, a program had to address one or more of the following categories of chronic diseases and underlying behavioral risk factors: asthma, cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke, obesity, physical activity, poor nutrition, and tobacco use.

Seattle-King County Healthy Homes Project (SKCHH) won the award in the public sector category. SKCHH is a nationally recognized leader in helping children with asthma reduce the frequency and severity of their asthma attacks through providing their families with education and resources to make their homes asthma-friendly and to keep asthma under control. By using community health workers who provide information, resources and support to families, the project has helped reduce the number of days children have asthma symptoms by 60 percent and the proportion of children using emergency health services by 64 percent — for its first 138 children enrolled in the project. Community health workers have now served more than 500 families in the Seattle area. SKCHH is partnering with public housing agencies and private landlords to improve structural deficiencies and build new public housing that includes features to minimize exposure to asthma triggers. Such a partnership, which brings together public health experts and housing developers and owners is both novel and exemplifies the leadership role of SKCHH. One of SKCHH’s success stories has led to the inclusion of “Healthy Homes” features in 1600 new housing units in the area.

Johnson & Johnson won an award in the large-employer category. The company promotes a healthy workforce with its employee health and wellness program, which integrates disabilities management, employee assistance, occupational health, wellness/fitness, and work-life services. The program covers more than 47,000 employees.

Union Pacific Railroad also won an award in the large-employer category. HHS noted the company’s Health Track program that aims to address the evolving medical



During the 25th Annual Urban League Equal Opportunity Day on November 18, 2003, Susan Savage, Secretary of State, and Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., OPM Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration, presented a commendation from Governor Brad Henry to Marc Morial, President/CEO of the National Urban League, which declared Mr. Morial an “Honorary Oklahoma Citizen.” During his remarks, Mr. Morial, former mayor of New Orleans, noted that he and his city would be proud to welcome the Oklahoma Sooners and their fans to the Sugar Bowl—UNLESS Oklahoma played the Louisiana State University Tigers. Editor’s Note: The Oklahoma Sooners play the LSU Tigers in the Sugar Bowl on Sunday, January 4, 2004. Oh well.



OPM Team members Dayna R. Petete, Assistant Administrator for Communications and Legislative Liaison (left), and Herman Johnson, Targeted Minority Recruitment Coordinator (right), visited with over 100 job seekers during the Urban League Equal Opportunity Career Fair on November 18.

needs of the company’s employees. Health Track works to identify possible at-risk employees and provide them with intervention programs, company-sponsored exercise opportunities, and general health education and disease management.

The Waco-McLennan County Public Health District in Texas won an award in the small-employer category. The district has a workforce of 72 employees, with 40 of

them participating in the worksite wellness program. The program helps individuals set personal goals and flexible exercise routines, and employees are given a paid hour each workday to participate in and record the physical activity of their choice.

*Best Wishes for a
healthy and happy 2004!*