

# USDA *news*

USDA's Employee News Publication—For You & About You!

## USDA Reinforces Its Encouragement Of Voluntary Details By Employees To PRTs In Afghanistan And Iraq

by Ron Hall  
Office of Communications

Secretary **Ed Schafer** recently gave a big plug to encourage USDA employees to participate in particular assignments in Afghanistan and Iraq—and **Larry Trouba** probably couldn't be happier.

Trouba, a Special Projects Officer in the Foreign Agricultural Service, heads an eight-person team that coordinates the recruitment and selection for, the deployment to, and the support of "Provincial Reconstruction Teams" in those two countries by USDA employees. So he said it really made his day when the Department's employees, at headquarters and field locations across the country, were sent an e-mail dated May 13, 2008.

That e-mail consisted of two items. The first item was a memorandum, dated April 28, 2008 and titled "Recruitment for Provincial Reconstruction Teams," which was addressed to USDA Subcabinet Officials and Agency Heads from Schafer. In that memo Schafer advised that "Recognizing the importance of the agricultural sector in Afghanistan and Iraq and the extraordinary contribution of... USDA... to the overall strategy for the reconstruction in these coun-

tries, I am calling on all agencies of USDA to actively disseminate to their employees the attached announcement for detail opportunities, serving as agricultural advisors to Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)."

"For nearly five years," the memo continued, "USDA has contributed exceptional individuals to serve on PRTs in Afghanistan, where, with their colleagues from the U.S. military, Department of Defense, Department of State, and U.S. Agency for International Development, they have helped reconstruct the physical and institutional infrastructure of Afghanistan's agricultural sector. As USDA continues this vital work in Afghanistan, we have been expanding these efforts to Iraq, and we are seeing the Iraqi people benefit from the unique expertise our people can offer during this critical moment in the development of their country."

The memo noted the role played by FAS in the recruitment, selection, training, and overall coordination of the PRT-supported efforts by USDA. It also acknowledged the risks, on the part of the Department's employees, that accompany their opportunity to participate in this activity in those two countries.

The memo concluded by encouraging "all interested and



ARS Research Ecologist **Andy Lenssen** (left) secures, to his fleece vest, an "I e-rased my e-waste" button. He and his wife **Sue Blodgett** earned those buttons. They had just dropped off, for loading into the truck in the background, several of their 'home electronic waste items' at the ARS-initiated "E-rase Your E-waste" event—held in the parking lot of ARS's Northern Plains Agricultural Research Lab in Sidney, MT. This ARS-initiated event, to recycle 'electronic waste,' has since become a model for other rural communities across the nation. Note **Beth Redlin's** story on page 4.—**Photo by Jackie Couture**

eligible individuals to apply, and convey my gratitude to those employees who step forward to offer themselves for these assignments. Those employees are to be commended, and their supervisors and unit colleagues should be recognized, for sacrifices they may make in enabling their staff to serve in Afghanistan and Iraq."

The second item in the May 13 e-mail to all USDA employees was a recruitment announcement titled "Detail Opportunities in IRAQ/AFGHANISTAN." It described what is involved in the detail assignments as agricultural

advisors on PRTs to Iraq and Afghanistan, and how to apply. That recruitment announcement also stated that: participants must be "willing to live and work in remote locations in a volatile and unpredictable security environment;" participants in both countries, as part of this initiative, "receive a package of allowances and differentials on top of base salary that currently equal 75% of base salary plus applicable premium pay"—and that figure includes what is called "Danger Pay" of 35 percent of that employee's basic pay; and

*continued on pg. 2...*



# Ed Schafer *Secretary of Agriculture*

**D**ear Fellow Employees,  
Over the last few weeks I've had two great opportunities to see Americans and leaders from all over the world on two very different crises.

The settings ranged from a riverbank in Iowa piled high with sandbags to much more refined surroundings at the headquarters of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome. But the impulse to help—person to person, or government to government—was very much the same.

The floods in the Midwest have been the worst to hit that region in 15 years. When I traveled with President **George W. Bush** and other Cabinet members to Iowa, I got a firsthand look at what the surging floodwaters have done to the homes, businesses, and farmland that stood in their path.

I dealt with a similar disaster in 1997 when I was governor of North Dakota and the Red River flooded and put the cities of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks underwater. It took a few years and a lot of hard work but both those communities came back stronger than they were before.

I am sure the people in Iowa, Missouri, Indiana, and the other states that have been hit by this year's floods will be able to do the same. We won't know the full cost of the damage that has been done until the waters recede enough to accurately assess it. But the President made it clear that the federal government stands ready to provide emergency disaster aid throughout the region to help people find temporary housing and start reclaiming their homes, farms, and businesses.

I was very pleased with the way USDA responded to the flood. The Farm Service Agency has been in the lead, but the effort has

involved many agencies, and our people working on the front lines and behind the scenes have been doing a great job.

The overall relief effort is being led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Its first job is finding housing for those who lost their homes in the flood and it is mobilizing resources throughout the federal government, from faith-based organizations, and from the private sector to get that done.

Just a couple of weeks earlier, I had the honor of leading the U.S. delegation to the United Nations' High Level Conference on Food Security in Rome. This meeting had been planned last year to deal with the issues of global climate change and bioenergy.

But it became particularly timely in light of the food price crisis that has hit many countries around the world in recent months, leading to shortages of wheat and rice, price spikes, and outbreaks of social unrest.

The conference brought together representatives of 181 countries—including more than 40 heads of state—and gave them a chance to share their views and consider ideas on what needs to be done to assure that the world's food supply remains stable and accessible to all nations.

The United States put forward a three-point program. We called for more immediate food aid to meet the current crisis but also a greater international commitment to agricultural development in poorer nations and to removing export restrictions and other barriers to trade in agricultural goods.

Food security is the most basic of human needs. Making sure it is available to all the world's people is going to take longer than helping the flood victims in the Midwest get their lives on track. But the keys to getting the job done are the same—commitment, cooperation, and caring. ■

## *Voluntary Details...continued from pg. 1*

"FAS is reimbursing all agency costs associated with these assignments."

The Sept.–Oct. 2006 issue of the **USDA NEWS** carried a story, titled "For USDA Employees Who Are Interested, This Is Definitely A Unique Overseas Assignment." That story alerted USDA employees to the availability of assignments in Afghanistan as part of not only PRTs but also "Participating Agency Service Agreements" (PASAs) between USDA and USAID.

So, been there, done that, story-wise, right? Plus, for eons several USDA agencies have posted employees around the world in a variety of assignments—so why a particular spotlight on this particular USDA initiative, to include a followup story?

"Well," replied Trouba, "first of all, two years ago USDA employees were only participating in Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan. Later, we were asked to participate in PRTs in Iraq, so we ultimately became involved in PRTs there as well."

"Second," noted FAS International Program Specialist **Katya Caballero**, "there are only two countries in the world which have PRTs—Iraq and Afghanistan—so that makes the involvement of USDA employees rather unique in that regard."

"Third," added FAS Development Resources Specialist **Bud Eaton**, "there has been a growing push within the federal government to get more federal departments involved in U.S.-assisted 'stability and reconstruction operations' in countries around the globe. And, since so many of those countries have large portions of their population and economy involved in agriculture, this points to an ever stronger role for USDA."

"Fourth," advised Caballero, "the death of **Tom Stefani** was a sobering reinforcement of the risks involved in this effort. So I think that led to an even more serious appreciation of the role our employees play in this undertaking in Iraq and Afghanistan." Stefani, a Forest Service Range Conservationist from the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in

northeast Nevada, was serving on a voluntary assignment with a PRT when he was killed on Oct. 4, 2007 near Ghazni, Afghanistan in an explosion that impacted his convoy.

"Fifth," observed Trouba, "in addition to appreciating the obvious sacrifice made by our employees who participate onsite in this effort, in the last few years I think there's been a greater appreciation, by senior officials at USDA, of a different type of sacrifice. It's the sacrifice, back at the 'home office,' that's shouldered by the supervisors and colleagues of those participating employees, since they're then called upon to 'pick up the slack' for those deployed employees. So, frankly, the Secretary's memo gives some cover to employees—and to their supervisors—who might otherwise take some heat for leaving their 'home office' to participate in this voluntary assignment."

"Sixth," emphasized **Bruce Crossan**, Chief of FAS's Post Conflict and Disaster Assistance Branch, "while this undertaking  
*continued on pg. 7...*

# Notes *from USDA Headquarters*

## BioEnergy Awareness Days:

USDA hosted the second annual “BioEnergy Awareness Days” on June 19–22. “Its purpose,” noted **Scott Dockum**, the Small Business Innovation Research Program Specialist in the Cooperative State Research, Extension, and Education Service, “was to promote innovative research activities that support renewable energy, and spotlight exhibits on energy conservation, education, and extension projects.”

Specialists from nine participating USDA agencies staffed exhibits on the lawn of USDA’s Whitten Building in Washington, DC. Those exhibits featured such items as: an Agricultural Research Service poster describing how to balance feedstock production with soil resource protection; an exhibit discussing the Forest Service’s woody biomass utilization and energy initiatives; and a poster board from the National Agricultural Statistics Service showing corn-for-grain production, in bushels, by county in the U.S. during 2007, plus the location of ethanol plants in the U.S. that are producing and those that are under construction.

In addition, ARS’s National Arboretum in Washington, DC was the site of the Arboretum’s new “Power Plants” garden. “The new garden features 21 familiar and not-so-familiar plants—such as sunflowers, sugar beets, camelina, mustard, and algae—that offer agriculture-based bioenergy options,” explained **Susan Burgess**, Coordinator of Special Events and Media Relations for the Arboretum. “This one-acre exhibit is the first of its kind in a U.S. botanical garden.”

“It was a good way to learn more about how USDA is working to enhance bioenergy specifically, as well as other forms of sustainable, renewable energy,” Dockum affirmed.

## Results Of Employee Survey:

USDA’s employees recently participated in a Departmentwide survey—and the results of that survey are now available on USDA’s website.

“Back in 2004 Congress established a requirement that federal departments survey their employees annually,” explained **Mary Jo Thompson**, Director of the Office of Special Projects in the Office of Human Capital Management. “The purpose was to assess employee satisfaction in the workplace, as well as assess leadership and management practices that contribute to Departmental performance.”

Accordingly, the Office of Personnel Management issued regulations, effective Jan. 1, 2007, that prescribed 45 questions to be included in each Department’s Annual Employee Survey, and the results were to be reported back to OPM. Then OHCM, in collaboration with USDA’s Office of Civil Rights, developed an additional 10 questions on diversity, which were then added to the 45 base questions.

Samples from the 45 base questions included: “I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization,” “Employees are protected from health and safety hazards on the job,” and “In my work unit, steps are taken to deal with a poor performer who cannot or will not improve.” A sample from the additional 10 questions included “Employees in my organization are willing to bring up a discrimination issue if it occurs.”

Thompson noted that OHCM conducted the first USDA-administered annual survey to all USDA employees, at headquarters and field locations, between Dec. 3–31, 2007, in electronic and paper form. “We had over 28,000 employees participate,” she emphasized.

“Each mission area, program



Secretary **Ed Schafer** (right) shovels dirt onto the American chestnut tree planted in honor of **Steven Thomas “Tom” Stefani IV**. A Forest Service Range Conservationist from the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in northeast Nevada, Stefani was serving on a voluntary assignment with a Provincial Reconstruction Team when he was killed on Oct. 4, 2007 near Ghazni, Afghanistan in an explosion that impacted his convoy. The tree planting took place on May 2 on the lawn of USDA’s Whitten Building in Washington, DC. Looking on are (L to R) brother **Dan Stefani**, mother **Barbara Stefani**, close friend **Jessica Dhaemers**, and father **Steven Stefani**.—Photo by **Alice Welch**

agency, and staff office received not only the overall USDA survey results but also an individual response reflecting input from their own employees,” she said. “They are using this survey, as well as any future surveys, to realize their own areas of success, as well as pinpoint their own areas that need improvement.”

The survey results can be found at [www.usda.gov/da/employment/2007AES.pdf](http://www.usda.gov/da/employment/2007AES.pdf)

## ‘Inaugural Forecast’:

On June 10 USDA released a report titled “World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates.” And while it may have looked similar to other monthly reports with that title, this particular report was unique. According to **Carol Skelly**, a cotton analyst in the Office of the Chief Economist and Chair of USDA’s Interagency Cotton Estimates Committee, it’s the first time in 79 years that USDA has included—in this or in any other USDA report—a price forecast for U.S. cotton.

“USDA was prohibited by law from forecasting U.S. cotton prices,” she explained. “The rea-

son is that in 1927 USDA had issued a report predicting that U.S. cotton prices would fall—and that’s what did happen. Members of the U.S. Senate believed that it was the USDA forecast that caused U.S. cotton prices to fall. After conducting hearings, in 1929 Congress passed a law prohibiting USDA from publishing any future U.S. cotton forecasts.”

“But,” said **Gary Crawford**, a Radio News Reporter in the Office of Communications, “the recently passed Farm Bill removed that prohibition.”

So what did this newly-issued forecast say? “The average cotton price for 2008/09 is expected to range from 58 to 72 cents per pound, up from 57 cents per pound during 2007/08,” Skelly noted. “The reason for that increase—as spelled out in what you might call our ‘inaugural forecast’—is because of tighter U.S. and world cotton supplies.”

And USDA’s second U.S. cotton price forecast report in 79 years? It’s expected to be released in July.

—**RON HALL**

# Employees *make these things happen*

## RURAL DEVELOPMENT

### With THIS Doghouse, Being Involved Is a Good Thing

Different USDA offices around the country no doubt employ their own techniques and tactics to promote team building and cross-program training among their employees. For Rural Development employees in Vermont and New Hampshire, that technique lately has involved an “RD Relay.”

And the net result has included a doghouse and a sandbox.

“Once a year our estimated 60-plus RD employees based in New Hampshire and Vermont all meet outdoors, often in an area park, for a full day of team building and camaraderie,” explained **Karen Gagnon**, RD’s Contracting Officer based at the RD state office in Montpelier, VT. “As part of the day’s activities, employees break into relay teams.”

She noted that each relay team, comprised of 6 to 8 employees, literally races to a total of 12 stations, set up outdoors. The premise of the relay is similar to situations on popular reality TV shows such as “The Amazing Race” and “Survivor.” The tasks assigned to the teams connect to the RD mission in general and, in particular, to the various ways in which RD customers utilize RD assistance.

“For instance,” noted **Marie Ferris**, the Montpelier-based Administrative Assistant to the RD State Director, “one station called for each team to follow steps to ‘build a home’ in cooperation with other teams. The purpose was to provide a mock replica of how participating families in RD’s Self-Help Program operate when they contribute ‘sweat equity’ or when they furnish their share of the required labor for the construction of a home.”

Accordingly, the teams—garbed in distinctive team uniforms, which have included unique bandanas, caps, or bucket hats—raced to each station to perform their

specific tasks. Each team was equipped with a data sheet to record its answers. “The goal was to be the team that was the fastest and most accurate,” noted **Steve Epstein**, RD’s New Hampshire Business Program Loan Specialist based in Concord, NH.

A typical question included the following: “This RD program has its own section at most major bookstores. It requires a minimum of four applicants who will master the art of cooperation. List the program and sub-program name.” In addition, the station was equipped with instructions, hardware, and supplies to build a ‘home.’ “Well, get a grip, we certainly weren’t going to build a single-family house in one hour,” quipped **Bev Mason**, RD’s Northern New Hampshire Area Director, based in Conway, NH. “But what we *did* come up with was a one-bedroom doghouse.”

A similar team-building contest required the participants to build a sandbox. Accordingly, using a global positioning system, or GPS, unit, each team had to find its way to a set point, and, once at that point, answer program-related questions. Sample questions included “The population limit for a Water or Waste Water Project is?” and “What is not an eligible Community Facility Project under the Community Facility Direct Loan Program?” Each station was supplied with an RD All Program Guide, RD’s VT/NH Annual Report, and program-specific brochures which teams used to find the correct answers.

So the teams won their respective relays, and a lot of high-fives followed. But what to do next with the items the teams constructed?

“We decided to donate the doghouse to the New Hampshire Humane Society in Laconia, New Hampshire,” noted Gagnon. That group had received a \$1.8 million RD Community Facilities Direct Loan in 2004 for

a new building.

And the sandbox? “We donated it to the Little Dipper’s Doodle Children’s Center in St. Johnsbury, Vermont,” said **Mark Koprowski**, RD’s Community Programs Loan Specialist in St. Johnsbury. “That child care center had received a \$600,000 RD Business and Industry Loan Guarantee in 2007 for the expansion and construction of a 24-hour unique child care facility.”

“Our employees take great pride in our ability to creatively think out-of-the-box, and these cross-program and team-building trainings help us strengthen staff relationships,” emphasized **Jolinda LaClair**, RD’s State Director for Vermont and New Hampshire, based in Montpelier. “Plus,” she mused, “it let us play in the sandbox!”

—**Anita Rios Moore**



“Hey, we’re in the groove—and we’re almost finished,” concludes RD Northern New Hampshire Area Director **Bev Mason** (left), as she and her teammates—RD Housing Loan Specialist **Mike Bard** (back to camera), RD Business Program Loan Specialist **Sherry Paige** (center, wearing bandana), and RD Community Programs Loan Specialist **Andrea Ansevin-Allen**—work on a wooden doghouse they are helping to construct as part of an “RD Relay.”—**Photo by Scott Johnson**

## RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS

### ARS Helps Make ‘E-Recycling’ A Reality In Rural America

When asked why she’s so dedicated to electronic waste recycling in her community, **Jackie Couture** answers simply, “Because I’m a mom and because it’s the right thing to do.”

She’s also the Safety and Occupational Health Specialist at the Agricultural Research Service’s Northern Plains Agricultural Research

Laboratory in Sidney, MT. As such, she’s well aware of the potential environmental and health risks associated with ‘electronic waste,’ especially when such items end up in landfills.

And that’s what drove ARS and Couture to set up the first ‘e-waste’ recycling event on Lab property in Sidney. While that particular event, which took place in June 2005, was only the second-ever community e-waste recycling

event in the state of Montana, its larger significance may be that it was thought to be the first in Montana—and possibly even the first throughout the country—that took place outside of a metropolitan area. And, of equal significance, this ARS-initiated event has since become a model for other rural communities across the nation.

*continued on pg. 5...*

# Editor's Roundup *USDA's people in the news*



**Dawn Charging** is USDA's Director of Native American Programs.

Located in the Department's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, she is USDA's primary contact with American Indian tribal governments and their members.

From January 2005 until her appointment to this position Charging served in the North Da-

kota House of Representatives as the first Native American to serve the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation and parts of six counties in West Central North Dakota. During 2005 she served as the Director of the Three Affiliated Tribes Tourism and Government Services, based in New Town, ND, where she acted as a liaison between tribal, county, state, and federal government offices. From 1994–98 she served as Communications Director/Photographer and Film Commissioner for the

North Dakota State Tourism Department, based in Bismarck, ND. She worked as a freelance photographer and writer, based in Garrison, ND, from 1989–2004. She has worked as a public servant in state or tribal government, either in the private sector or as an elected official, throughout her professional career.

Charging has been an accredited member of the Native American Journalists Association, Outdoor Writers Association

of America, and Great Lakes Outdoor Writers Association. She is an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes—the home of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara.

**Patrick Atagi**, the previous Director of Native American Programs, is now the Senior Director of the Chlorine Chemistry Division with the American Chemistry Council, based in Arlington, VA, where he is concentrating on international and state issues related to chemistry. ■

...continued from pg. 4

Couture noted that 'electronics recycling'—a term that generally applies to such items as computer monitors and laptops, printers, copiers, fax machines, microwaves, VCRs, cellphones, digital cameras, and MP3 players—didn't really take hold until the New Millennium. "The few electronics recyclers on the scene at that time," she advised, "were concentrated in urban areas across the country. None served rural areas—or at least not at a manageable cost."

A second obstacle was that electronics recycling generally required participants to *pay* to recycle their items. "People were accustomed to getting paid when they recycled cans or bottles," she said. "So they needed to be educated about the importance of 'e-cycling'—in spite of the personal financial cost."

Recognizing the importance of recycling, Couture began storing up the Sidney ARS Lab's outdated electronic items, even before e-recycling was available in her area. "We had a vacant space in one of our storage buildings, and our Lab managers were very supportive in letting me fill it with e-waste," she said.

She then began searching for a reputable recycler who was willing to handle the Lab's growing mound of outdated electronic

items. "There just wasn't anything out there at that time," she said.

Then in early 2005 **Bob Evans**, the Lab's Research Leader and Facilities Coordinator, handed Couture a newspaper article in the "*Billings Gazette*" spotlighting a new recycling company—located in Wyoming—that handled 'e-waste.' "By that time I'd spent eight years storing outdated electronics items in our Lab, and I'd collected over 4,000 pounds of 'em," Couture emphasized. "So I made that call!"

That's when she discovered that the company offered a community 'e-cycling' program at reduced rates. So, after consulting with Lab officials and coworkers on the Lab's Environmental Management System Team, Couture was given the go-ahead to open the event to the community. And, in turn, she coordinated with such community entities as Richland County, Montana's utility businesses and health and disaster agencies, volunteer groups, and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.

To promote the first local 'e-cycling' event, Couture and fellow ARS employees created a graphic logo and a slogan: "E-erase Your E-waste." "Then," she said, "ARS developed and, along with our community partners, helped to distribute posters and educational brochures, send letters to local

businesses and organizations, and e-mail notices to local newspapers, inviting everyone to participate in this community event."

Counting ARS's 4,000-lb. 'contribution,' the first event collected more than 8,000 pounds of e-waste. Couture noted that that first event in 2005 kept more than 554 pounds of lead out of the local county's landfill. She said she based that on information from the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition in San Jose, CA, showing that the average computer and CRT monitor at that time weighed between 60 and 70 pounds, of which slightly more than 6 percent was composed of lead. In addition, the average TV contains approximately 4–8 pounds of lead.

The Lab's first e-waste event earned considerable community notice and, in 2006, local community groups even helped to subsidize the costs to individuals who wanted to recycle. Couture explained that—"until the money ran out"—those groups essentially subsidized the first 200 pounds of e-waste being recycled per customer. "That reduced the individual e-cycling costs from about 40 cents per pound to about 20 cents per pound," she noted.

In the two years since that inaugural effort, the annual Sidney area "E-erase Your E-waste" event has collected 9,336 lbs. of e-waste in 2006 and 18,460 lbs. in

2007. The next annual event is planned for Sept. 5–6, 2008 and, for the fourth year in a row, will be held in the Lab's parking lot.

But ARS's e-recycling work wasn't limited to its Northern Plains Ag Research Lab. News coverage of the inaugural event prompted requests from other communities and organizations to use ARS's slogan, logo, posters, and other materials related to this particular activity. So Couture and her team developed templates for other ARS labs and communities to use to advertise their own e-  
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*It's full speed ahead, sort of, for ARS Utilities Systems Operator **Mark Basta**. He is delivering some outdated office electronics items being contributed by ARS's Northern Plains Agricultural Research Lab to the "E-erase Your E-waste" recycling event.—Photo by Jackie Couture*

...continued from pg. 5



**Bill James** is the Assistant Administrator of the Office of International Affairs in the Food Safety and

Inspection Service.

From June 2004 until his selection for this position James

served as the Deputy Assistant Administrator of the Office of International Affairs in FSIS. He was the Executive Director for Public Health and Scientific Program Services within FSIS's Office of Public Health Science from 2003–04. From 1997–2003 he served as Director of FSIS's Zoonotic Diseases and Residue Surveillance Division.

James was Director of the In-

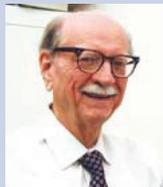
spection Systems Development Division in FSIS's Office of Policy and Program Development from 1996–97. From 1990–96 he served as Director of the Slaughter Inspection Standards and Procedures Division in FSIS's [then] Office of Science and Technology. He began his federal career in 1983 in the Shenandoah Valley of western Virginia as a Supervisory Veterinary Medical

Officer in FSIS's Office of Field Operations. From 1980–83 he worked as a Marine Biologist in the Gulf of Mexico for Louisiana's McNeese State University.

**Karen Stuck**, the previous Assistant Administrator of FSIS's Office of International Affairs, retired from that position following 35 years of federal service. ■

continued on pg. 7...

## PROFILE PLUS *More About: Calvin Beale*



**Calvin Beale** is a Senior Demographer—or, as he likes to think of it, a “Demographic Geographer”—in the Economic Research Service. In that capacity he focuses on demographic studies of rural small-town populations, including farmers, looking for patterns and trends in growth, decline, and/or migration of rural residents.

Beale has authored a whole lot of demographic studies over the years—because he's been with USDA and the federal government for a whole lot of years. In fact, since his federal service computation date is November 1946, he has over 61 years of federal service. Therefore, he is thought to be the USDA employee with the longest years of full-time federal service currently employed at the Department. **Harold “Bruno” Mangum**, who was a Farm Service Agency communications coordinator in Raleigh, NC, previously held that distinction until he passed away from an extended illness, while on Sick Leave status, in October 2007. Mangum was 90.

Beale, who is 85, was born on June 6, 1923, “in the front bedroom of 629 14th Street, Northeast, in Washington, DC,” he recounted. “My older brother was told to go outside and watch the Shriner's parade that was in town at the time, to get him out from underfoot while I was being born.” Beale contracted tuberculosis as a teenager, so wasn't eligible for military service during World War II. Instead, he began working at the Veterans Administration in 1942 as a GS-1 ‘under file clerk.’ In 1943 he moved to the Office of Strategic Services—the predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency—as a map clerk. “I'd catalog maps from all over the world, and then I'd fetch them when some military official would request a particular map,” he recalled. “What I remember is the paper cuts I'd keep getting on my fingers, doing all that fetching.” He was also going to college at the time, so his federal employment was often part-time.

In 1945 he graduated from [then] Wilson Teachers College in Washington, DC with a B.S. degree in geography and history. Periods of graduate school followed, in Maryland and Wisconsin, until he decided he wanted to work on the 1950 U.S. Census. So he joined the U.S. Census Bureau in Washington, DC, working on and off until 1953, while also attending graduate school—ultimately receiving an M.S. degree in sociology in 1981.

“During 1953, work on the 1950 U.S. Census officially ended,” he advised, “and suddenly a lot of us lost our jobs.” But he knew some employees at USDA, specifically **Margaret Hagood** with the Department's [then] Bureau of Agricultural Economics. “I knew her through what the modern generation would call ‘networking’,” he quipped. He was hired as a demographer in 1953, “and I've

been doing that work for the Department ever since.”

When asked for anecdotes from his USDA career he related that USDA publishes periodic reports which include estimates of the number of people living on farms and what the trends of farm life are. “So one year, during the mid-1950s, our office invited the farmers, that I was helping to survey, to provide their own comments about trends. During that particular period a number of farmers were leaving the farm to go into what was called ‘public work’—in other words, work off the farm. So that meant the number of farms was dwindling. Well, I dutifully included that information in our report, the report went through all the normal clearance steps, and we printed copies of it. But then a senior official at the Department apparently figured that no administration, and no secretary of agriculture—no matter who is in office—wants to hear that the number of farms is dwindling. So he decided we should quash the report by destroying all the copies. And then someone else decided to destroy all those copies by actually burning them all. A reporter from the *Madison [Wisconsin] Capital Times* newspaper got wind of that, the incident became known as ‘The Burning Of The Farm Population Estimates,’ and I was among several at USDA called to Congress to testify about this incident.”

“I guess that was the one big imbroglio in my career,” he said. “But it all worked out all right, there wasn't any retribution, and I just went back to my office and kept doing my job. But you might say that, once again, history showed that the coverup can be worse than the original event.”

**Last Book Read:** “*Up In Honey's Room*” by **Elmore Leonard**. “I like Elmore Leonard's writing—but not this one. So I didn't finish it.”

**Last Movie Seen:** “*Charlie Wilson's War*.”

**Hobbies:** “I like traveling the U.S., and I've been trying to visit every county seat across the country. I've gotten to 2,500 out of the 3,100 so far. And when I'm there, I photograph the county courthouses.” Those images can be found at [www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/population/photos/thumbnails.asp](http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/population/photos/thumbnails.asp).

**Something I Don't Want People To Know About Me:** “For the last 55 years I've lived in a pre-World War I house in DC—first by renting an apartment in it, and then in 1974 I bought the house. I've dreaded anyone seeing it after over 50 years of accumulated clutter.”

**Priorities In The Months Ahead:** “Surviving as gracefully as possible the cancer I've been treated for.”

—**RON HALL**

...continued from pg. 6



**Greg Parham** is the Deputy Administrator for Marketing and Regulatory Programs-Business

Services in the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

From March 2006 until his selection for this position Parham served as the Chief Information Officer for APHIS. He was the Associate CIO for Information Resources Management in the Office of the Chief Information Officer from 2000-06, after having served from 1997-2000 as the Executive Sponsor for the Department's Year 2000—or "Y2K"—Remediation.

Parham served as the National Program Leader for Live-stock Production and Extension

Veterinary Medicine in the Co-operative State Research, Education, and Extension Service from 1994-97, after having been the Director for Distance Education and Information Technology in the [then] Extension Service in Washington, DC from 1990-94. From 1986-90 he served as the Chief of the Epidemiology Branch in the Food Safety and Inspection Service, after having worked from 1982-86 as the Staff Officer for Epidemiology in FSIS. He began his federal career in 1980 in Atlanta as an Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer with the Centers for Disease Control at the U.S. Public Health Service.

**Bill Hudnall**, the previous Deputy Administrator for Marketing and Regulatory Programs-Business Services, retired from that position following 37 years of federal service, all with USDA. ■

...continued from pg. 5

waste events, and then posted those activities under "Safety Information" on the Lab's website, [www.ars.usda.gov/npa/nparl](http://www.ars.usda.gov/npa/nparl). "The Montana Department of Environmental Quality," she added, "uses our logo and slogan on its website and has given our ARS website a plug in its brochure titled 'Electronic Waste Collection Events: A Guide to Success'."

In addition, Couture and members of the ARS Lab's Environmental Management System Team have spoken throughout Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota on electronics recycling in rural communities. One result: at least partly based on information from Couture, a number of small communities both inside and outside of Montana have developed their own e-recycling events.

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ARS's **Jackie Couture** (wearing cap) seems literally up to her elbows in outdated computers, as she reads the serial number off a computer processor after she had helped to weigh it. The serial number was then recorded on the recycling certificate of the owner of that computer processor, in order to demonstrate proper disposal of that item. It was all part of the ARS-initiated "E-rase Your E-waste" event—held in the parking lot of ARS's Northern Plains Agricultural Research Lab in Sidney, MT—to recycle 'electronic waste.' This ARS-initiated event has since become a model for other rural communities across the nation. Note **Beth Redlin's** story on page 4.—**Photo by Debra Waters**

And interest in electronics recycling is likely to expand even more in early 2009, according to **Kevin Dahl**, the ARS Information Technology Specialist at the Sidney Lab. Pointing to a story in the March-April 2008 issue of the **USDA NEWS** titled "How We're Spreading The Word About Big Changes Ahead In Your TV Recep-

tion," Dahl noted that "we're no doubt going to see an increasing number of old TVs in the electronic waste stream in the next couple of years, both here locally and across the country, as the February 2009 transition deadline from analog to digital TV signals fast approaches."

—**Beth Redlin**

**Voluntary Details...continued from pg. 2**

has had a sincere commitment from the Office of the Secretary in the past, that May 13 communication from Secretary Schafer was the first time that a memo had been e-mailed—under the signature of the Secretary of Agriculture—to employees around the country, alerting them to this activity in both Afghanistan and Iraq, and then encouraging them to participate."

As of June 30, 2008 USDA had 22 employees—from headquarters and field locations—participating in Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and 12 employees in PRTs in Afghanistan. Agencies contributing employees to PRTs since September 2003 have included the Agricultural Marketing Ser-

vice, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, the Farm Service Agency, FAS, FS, the Food Safety and Inspection Service, the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Rural Development.

"So far," Trouba emphasized, "our USDA employees working in the Provincial Reconstruction Teams have—to a person—brought great ag-related skills to those PRTs in both countries."

"So we're still actively looking for qualified candidates, and we want even more employees to consider this option—but let the record reflect that we plan to keep that skill level high." ■



“Guess what: it fits!” declares RD Community Programs Director **Rhonda Shippee** (right, with shades atop head), as she angles one side of a roof onto a wooden doghouse. She and her teammates who are helping to construct that doghouse—(L to R) RD Community Programs Technician **Karen Demers**, RD Community Programs Loan Specialist **Mark Koprowski**, and RD Program Technician **Kathie LaPorte**—are members of a team participating in an “RD Relay” in Hanover, NH. It’s all part of a unique exercise to promote team building and cross-program training among RD employees in Vermont and New Hampshire. Note **Anita Rios Moore’s** story on page 4.—**Photo by Tammy Surprise**



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 Hair: Black Eyes: Brown  
 Height: 5 ft. 5 in. Weight: 130 lbs.

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