

The Federal Manager



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PRESIDENT'S PAGE



FMA National President
Patricia Niehaus

FMA's Federal Community Presence

Hello, Team FMA! As you've heard many times, if we are to continue to be a viable association and exercise the type of influence we currently enjoy, *our membership must grow*. Imagine what we could do if each member invited one person to join FMA!

During my past few trips as FMA's National President, I was very impressed at the level of respect FMA is afforded. In August, I went to Kansas City for the Blacks in Government (BIG) Conference, where I participated on a panel discussion on performance management. The invitation to present was offered to me due to

FMA's Immediate Past President Darryl Perkinson's impressive presentation at last year's BIG conference.

In September, I attended the Service to America Medals (SAMMIES) Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C., honoring the unparalleled achievements of federal employees. What an impressive group of civil servants! In addition to the National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations (LMR Council) meeting I attend each month, FMA Executive Director Todd Wells and I met with the Department of Commerce and the Department of Agriculture during this trip. We have been invited to participate in future Commerce meetings and signed a mutually beneficial Memorandum of Understanding with USDA! I also attended a meeting of the Government Managers Coalition.

Following a very busy September visit to D.C., I immediately flew to Los Angeles to join George Smith, Region 2 Director and Jose Limon, member of Chapter 252, at the Department of Defense's New Beginnings Conference in Los Angeles. I also met another FMA member there, Kim Bostrom from Chapter 6, who was representing Portsmouth Shipyard. Invitees for this conference consisted of 100 management personnel and 100 union representatives. The purpose of the conference was to collaboratively brainstorm ideas for creating a new personnel system at DOD. It will be interesting to follow this process through to its completion, and I am proud FMA is able to be a part of it. George was a member of the planning team for this conference and spent his evenings preparing for the next day – far above and beyond the time he put into the working groups during the day!

Upon leaving LA, I traveled to Napa, California, for the first FMA Region 4 Conference. Region Director Leonard Lew and planning committee members from FMA Chapters 167 and 381 put together a remarkable meeting centered around the theme *Celebrating Our Past, Preparing for Our Future*.

In October, I was back in D.C. for the monthly LMR Council meeting. As part of the Council, I chair a working group centered on expanding telework options in order to prevent another government shutdown during an emergency. While in town, I also met with the Social Security Administration Commissioner Michael Astrue and the Federal Labor Relations Authority Chair Carol Waller Pope. Just before heading to the airport, I was interviewed by Federal News Radio on the myths of poor performers in the federal government. You can listen to the interview on FMA's Website.

I rounded out my fall meetings with the November LMR Council meeting and the Mobile Workday working group met immediately afterwards to discuss our progress. I closed out the trip by attending the FMA Region 2 Conference in Virginia Beach. George Smith and his team put together a great meeting centered on the theme *Focusing on Tomorrow's Government*.

I hope your holidays were happy ones. As you reach out to those around you to help grow the association, please do not hesitate to call on me, your Region Director, or the National Office for assistance. Thank you for your contributions to our great association! ■

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All materials submitted to *The Federal Manager* should pertain to public service managers. Copy should be double-spaced, no longer than 10 pages.

High resolution color photographs, charts, or other illustrations should be included if possible. Text should be submitted on compact disc. Include a biography of the author.

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Service to America Medal Winners Exhibit Heroic Work Done by Federal Employees



Photo: Sam Kinsey/Kitner.com

By Partnership for Public Service

Service to America Medal Winners

The nonprofit, nonpartisan Partnership for Public Service annually honors dedicated, hardworking and often anonymous federal workers who are making a difference — a positive difference — in the lives of Americans.

Their accomplishments are inspiring and provide a window into the important and effective work of our government — stories that counter the steady drumbeat of anti-government rhetoric and unfair stereotypes of federal workers that routinely abound, and that send a powerful message to the American people about the importance of a strong federal career workforce.

Renamed the Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals in honor of the Partnership's late founder, the 2010 awards recognized a heroic immigration official who helped hundreds of Haitian orphans unite with their adoptive American families after the devastating earthquake; a young FBI agent who helps track down those involved in the sexual exploitation of children; a civilian Army team that developed a medical evacuation system to provide life-saving treatment and emergency transportation for severely wounded soldiers; and, a scientist who has done groundbreaking work on the ozone layer and on climate change, among others.

"The recipients of the Service to America Medals showcase the good that government does, which positively affects our lives every day," said Max Stier, the Partnership for Public Service president and CEO. "By honoring these outstanding public servants, we give America's unsung heroes the long overdue thanks and recognition they deserve."

The awards were presented at a black tie gala in the fall, with President Obama sending a letter of congratulations to the winners and finalists who "exemplify the spirit of service that marks our federal workforce."

"As we recognize their achievements, we are reminded that the collective efforts

of dedicated civil servants lay the foundation for America's prosperity and ensure a brighter future for our children," President Obama said.

Clearly, many private sector leaders agree, and their sponsorship makes the award program possible. National sponsors for the 2010 Service to America Medals include Booz Allen Hamilton, Chevron, CH2M Hill, DuPont and United Technologies Corporation.

Here are the extraordinary stories of the Service to America Medal recipients:

Pius Bannis: Providing Hope and Help for Haitian Orphans

When the devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti in January 2010, the nation's orphans were among the most vulnerable. Pius Bannis, a U.S. immigration officer, stepped into the breach to help hundreds of those Haitian orphans — babies, toddlers and teens — escape the tragedy and find safety in the United States.

In the days and weeks following the catastrophe, U.S. citizens in the process of adopting children in Haiti were desperate to gain custody of the youngsters and bring them to the United States, but were stymied because they had not yet completed all of the paperwork and requirements that can take as long as three years.

Aided by the Obama administration's decision to authorize use of humanitarian parole to bring certain orphans to the United States, Bannis, a field office director for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), logged 20-hour days, seven days a week to identify and screen eligible cases. He ensured the system was not being exploited by child traffickers or others with bad motives, coordinated with the State Department on evacuation arrangements, and dealt with



Pius D. Bannis, Field Office Director, Haiti, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2010 Federal Employee of the Year

Haitian authorities.

During the first two weeks after the earthquake, Bannis took it upon himself to set up a make-shift day care in the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince, where more than 50 children could be found at any one time, often scared, crying and hungry. He supplied diapers, clean clothes, water and food, and personally drove some of the children to the airport for evacuation flights to the United States.

"What Pius did was the singular most devoted act of public service and humanitarianism that I have seen in all my 30 years in immigration," said Steve Bucher, deputy associate director of Refugee, Asylum and International Operations at USCIS.

By April 2010, approximately 1,100 youngsters were allowed to come to the United States through the special accelerated program, and Bannis played a role in each case. "It was a human reaction



Susan Solomon, Senior Scientist, Chemical Science Division, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Earth System Research Laboratory

to a human tragedy. So many children were dead or dying, and so many were in the process of being adopted. We were all so concerned. My automatic reaction was to take care of them,” Bannis said.

Susan Solomon: Saving a Planet in Peril

During nearly three decades as a government scientist, Susan Solomon has engaged in pioneering research on the causes of the Antarctic ozone hole, identified the chemicals contributing to this serious environmental problem, and made significant findings that have advanced public understanding about global warming.

Working for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Colorado, Solomon was the first to theorize that

chlorofluorocarbons could play a defining role in forming the ozone hole. She then led expeditions to Antarctica in 1986 and 1987, where her key measurements produced the first evidence of chlorine chemistry as the cause.

Her work altered the course of atmospheric research and served as a foundation for the Montreal Protocol that led to the protection of the ozone layer by regulating the production of manmade compounds that destroy it.

Solomon also led another breakthrough study in 2009, this time focusing on global warming. Her detailed research demonstrated how changes in surface temperature, rainfall and sea level are largely irreversible for more than 1,000 years after carbon dioxide emissions are completely stopped. This study provided solid evidence that current choices regarding carbon dioxide emissions will have legacies affecting the climate that will irreversibly change the planet.

Solomon said she feels “very lucky to be able to work on two issues — ozone depletion and climate change.” She said her motivation has been “the opportunity to do research in the interest of the American public by understanding the environment and helping us all make informed choices.”

Saskia van Gendt: Recreating the Way We Create

As a young scientist at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Saskia van Gendt is leading innovative efforts to help foster green building construction and promote the design and development of reusable packaging to significantly reduce waste.

Van Gendt has focused her work on a new field that she calls “Climaterials” — the connection between climate change and materials.

“Saskia’s work is inspiring the re-design of buildings, products and packaging to encourage techniques that reuse materials instead of wasting them, paving the way for resource conservation and a sustainable society,” said Timonie Hood, EPA’s green building coordinator. “She’s a true environmental visionary.”

Van Gendt’s goal is to encourage the use of materials in construction that have as small a carbon footprint as possible in their creation, and that will be able to be reused or have a minimal environmental impact when they eventually are discarded.

“Construction materials often have large quantities of embodied carbon, which is the total amount of greenhouse gases that are emitted over the life of a material,” van Gendt said. “For example, materials like cement inherently emit large



Saskia van Gendt, Resource Conservation Expert, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX

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Photo: Sam Kithner/kithner.com

Shane Kelley and Eva Ristow, Director, Center for Automation (Kelley) and Project Manager (Ristow), Social Security Administration, Denver Region

amounts of carbon dioxide during production, and it is important to examine how we can reduce our consumption of cement and facilitate its reuse and recycling.”

The issue has huge implications. Each year, millions of tons of construction related materials are incinerated or dumped in landfills, accounting for nearly one-third of our nation’s total solid waste generation. New construction will significantly increase landfill waste in the future and result in harmful emissions from the use of new materials.

As one means of encouraging this new approach to construction, van Gendt in 2007 developed the Lifecycle Building Challenge, a yearly online competition that attracts numerous entries and recognizes cutting-edge building design and challenges students, architects and builders to reduce the environmental impact of buildings.

Shane Kelley and Eva Ristow: Serving the Underserved

The Social Security Administration has found it difficult to serve Americans living in remote and poor regions of the country, particularly on Indian reservations in the West where disabled and elderly citizens often have failed to take advantage of benefits that they desperately need.

Shane Kelley and Eva Ristow have helped bridge this gap, linking difficult-to-serve Indian communities in Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and Utah to Social Security claims officials hundreds of miles away through an Internet-based, two-way video conferencing system called Video Service Delivery (VSD).

“VSD’s greatest impact is its ability to bridge distances to help government reach

the customer rather than expecting the customer to reach government,” said Kelley.

This vast six-state geographic area is home to 29 Indian reservations, where life can be difficult. The two million acre Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, for example, contains three of the poorest counties in the United States. Infant mortality is five times the national average, unemployment hovers around 80 percent, and 49 percent of the population lives below the federal poverty line.

The delivery of Social Security services to such poor, remote locations is a challenge. Although connected by telephone and periodic visits, Social Security representatives have not always been able to achieve the consistent



Photo: Sam Kithner/kithner.com

Sandra K. Brooks, Deputy Director of Intelligence and Security and Chief of Innovation and Technology, Joint Interagency Task Force South and U.S. Department of the Navy, Naval Operations Information Dominance

“visual” communications essential in establishing an understanding of benefit programs. As a result, many applicants missed their scheduled interviews, leading to incomplete claims.

Social Security beneficiaries in these areas can now go to designated local libraries, public health clinics or other facilities close to home and get service “on demand” via the two-way video connection. Thanks to this added accessibility, VSD has increased the number of benefit applications by nearly 80 percent among Native Americans at some of the reservations.

“Some of these individuals have an average annual income of \$3,000. Helping them receive disability or retirement benefits has had a huge impact,” said Jan Foushee, a senior executive program specialist with Social Security.

Nancy Berryhill, the Social Security regional commissioner in Denver, said Kelley’s vision and leadership made the project a reality. “There was really no road map, but Shane is a problem solver. For him there are no problems, just opportunity,” she said.

Sandy Brooks: Detecting and Defeating Drug Traffickers

In two daring operations on the high-seas during September 2008, heavily armed U.S. authorities intercepted a pair of semi-submersible boats several hundred miles off the Guatemalan coast, seized 14 tons of cocaine worth nearly \$400 million and arrested the illicit traffickers.

These two seizures involved a growing threat in our nation’s war on drugs — the innovative use of small, semi-submersible vessels run by powerful drug cartels to smuggle billions of dollars of cocaine from various locations in South America into

the United States through Pacific Ocean and Caribbean routes. These vessels are barely visible as they skim the surface of the water, move quickly at night, and are designed to evade radar detection.

At the heart of the U.S. effort to combat this ever-growing armada of drug-laden stealth vessels is Sandy Brooks, the deputy director of intelligence and security for a network of federal agencies that target narcotics traffickers, weapons traders and, potentially, terrorists who might use maritime or air routes from South and Central America and the Caribbean.

Brooks’ role at Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) is to bring together information from multiple sources and share it with military, law enforcement and homeland security agencies for better speed of discovery, speed of decision and speed of action. This means constant electronic and visual surveillance, precise intelligence and staying ahead of the traffickers with new advanced technology.

Rear Admiral Dan Lloyd, director of JIATF-S, said Brooks is central to the task force’s success because she has a “great understanding of all the different types of information” needed to help identify “where and when to look” for drug traffickers.

Brooks also was instrumental in standing up the new National Maritime Intelligence Center, which brings together intelligence operations from the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard at the national level.

“She is figuring out how technology solutions will enable us to better connect the dots to prevent a future 9/11,” said retired Coast Guard Commandant Thad Allen. “Most importantly, she understands how to take technology and intelligence, and put them in the hands of the front-line personnel who need them. She’s a problem solver.”



Jamie L. Konstas, Intelligence Analyst, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Jamie Konstas: Protecting the Innocent

Federal Bureau of Investigation Intelligence Analyst Jamie Konstas has made major inroads fighting child sex trafficking in the United States by helping build, manage and utilize a groundbreaking national online database that allows federal, state and local law enforcement officials to access detailed information about pimps and child victims.

Konstas’ innovative national database helps authorities identify child victims of prostitution, collect and track intelligence regarding suspected pimps, and build investigations. Her work has led to the recovery of more than 1,100 child victims and the successful prosecutions of more than 600 pimps and predators.

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Prior to the advent of the database, local law enforcement authorities had few resources to help them track down exploited children or share information, especially when these children were taken across state lines.

"We recognized that pimps were taking children across the nation," said Konstas. "Investigators had physical binders of victims' photographs and the pimps they were trying to identify. We determined there needed to be a national database to allow them to share information with other investigators working child prostitution matters in other cities."

The sale of children for sex may seem unimaginable to most Americans, yet it is happening all over the country, every day, and in every city. It is estimated that roughly 100,000 children a year are bought

and sold for sex in the United States. Many have been kidnapped, are runaways or foster care children, and then find that they cannot escape the sexual servitude.

Ernie Allen, founder and head of National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, said Konstas takes it very personally when someone hurts a child. "She's very dedicated, and because of her dedication and her tenacity, she has really done incredible work," said Allen. "For her, this is not a job, this is a calling."

Teri Glass and Her Team: Ensuring Our Soldiers' Survival

As attacks from make-shift roadside bombs, known as improvised explosive devices (IEDs), wreaked havoc in Iraq and later in Afghanistan, Teri Glass and an Army support team worked tirelessly to make sure that wounded American soldiers have an increased chance at surviving these too often fatal blasts.

As the acting project manager for an Army Medical Support Systems Project Management Office, Glass and her team led the development and fielding of state-of-the-art medical evacuation equipment, which has allowed Army medics to more safely and efficiently transport patients off the battlefield to hospitals, significantly increasing the survival rate of service members wounded by IEDs.

"We had to reassess how to best keep our soldiers safe, which is the number one priority," said Glass. "We needed to figure out how we could both provide them with immediate treatment at the point of injury and also be able to get them back to the care they urgently needed within the critical first hour."

Driven by an urgent request originally issued during the conflict in Iraq, Glass and her team created the kit that facilitates the rapid conversion of a wide range of

non-ambulance vehicles into medical evacuation vehicles in less than one minute. The kit includes a foldable litter complete with a restraint and lift system to help soldiers carry and hoist their wounded comrades into the vehicle. It also involves a rear-facing attendant seat so that medics can swivel around to provide immediate treatment for the patient lying in the back seat.

Col. Russell Coleman, commander of the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Development Activity, said the evacuation equipment "has been widely credited by field commanders in both Iraq and Afghanistan as critical toward saving the lives of our deployed warfighters."

As a retired senior noncommissioned officer with more than 20 years of military service, Glass said she performs her duties with the soldiers constantly in mind. "I can picture myself out there too, so when we get feedback from soldiers telling us we helped to save lives, there is no better feeling than knowing we're doing our part to make a difference for them," said Glass.

Jeff Baker: Building Green, Saving Green

Jeff Baker has been the driving force behind the Department of Energy's (DOE) construction of the largest net-zero energy office building in the world, creating a ground-breaking approach for industry to improve energy performance and environmental quality, as well as save money.

The 220,000-square foot building in Golden, Colorado, combines state-of-the-art renewable energy techniques and on-site power production from high-efficiency photovoltaic cells to achieve net-zero energy, meaning the building creates as much or more energy in-house as it uses.

The Energy Department hopes the building not only will be seen as a stand-alone achievement, but also will introduce



Teri Glass and the Army Medical Support Systems Team, Acting Project Manager, Medical Support Systems Project Management Office, U.S. Army Medical Materiel Development Activity



Photo: Sam Kinney/kinney.com

Jeffrey M. Baker, Director, Office of Laboratory Operations, Golden Field Office, U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

a new energy culture in the United States. Commercial building energy usage accounts for 19 percent of our national energy consumption. The building was constructed for \$64 million, comparable to the price tag of more traditional structures, and it will save up to 50 percent of standard energy costs.

The “H” shaped structure is configured to provide the best possible daylight and cut the amount of electricity needed for lighting. It has natural ventilation, solar collectors that pull air heated by the sun into the building on cold days, and a labyrinth of concrete walls in the basement that capture the day’s heat or the night’s cool air to be slowly released upstairs. Water also flows through piping in the floors to warm or cool the air.

“Jeff is the soul of this project. Without

him, none of it would have been possible,” said John Sullivan, who served as Baker’s boss at DOE for six years. “Not only will this building be a showcase to the country and save a great deal of money for taxpayers, but it was done on budget and on time because of the intense planning and tenacity in which he approached it.”

Baker takes great pride in the project. “How many times do you really get a chance to change the direction of a nation? It was worth all the time and effort,” Baker said.

To nominate an outstanding federal worker for a 2011 Service to America Medal please go servicetoamericamedals.org. Nominations will be accepted through January 31, 2011. Winners are selected based on three main criteria: impact of their work on meeting the needs of the nation, on-the-job innovation, and commitment to public service.

Eight medals, including the coveted Federal Employee of the Year Medal, will be awarded. Medal categories include Homeland Security, Career Achievement, Call to Service, Citizen Services, National Security and International Affairs, Justice and Law Enforcement, and Environment, Science and Technology. All career civilian federal employees are eligible, and anyone may submit a nomination. The awards are accompanied by cash prizes, from \$3,000 to \$10,000.

Service to America Medal awardees will be honored in October, 2011, at a Washington, D.C., gala with government, business and entertainment leaders. Approximately thirty finalists will be honored at a Capitol Hill awards luncheon during Public Service Recognition Week, set to be celebrated nationally the first week of May, 2011. ■

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