

Second Training Conference Held for Service Centers Facilitators/Coordinators

By Kathryn Huey, NRCS
Service Center Implementation,
Change Management Team Leader

The second facilitator/coordinator conference for the USDA Service Centers training initiative was held recently in St. Louis, MO. Employees from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development, and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts gathered to master facilitation skills necessary to teach USDA Service Center Skills: Working Together for Customers training. (See the Fall 1996 Service Centers News). As with previous facilitator/coordinator sessions, student evaluations of the course described the training as not only successful, but intensive and challenging as well. A third conference to train facilitators and coordinators in the remaining States is scheduled for May. Below is a list of the coordinators and facilitators who participated in this conference.

Connecticut and Rhode Island

Coordinator: Sharon Pelletier, Rural Development, Windsor, CT
Facilitators: J. Eric Scherer, NRCS

Kentucky

Facilitator: Belinda Haken, Rural Development, Elkton

Louisiana

Facilitator: Susan McBride, NRCS, Crowley

Maine

Coordinator: Cleo Skolfield, Rural Development, Bangor
Facilitators: Michael Mathers, FSA, Presque Isle; Wayne Munroe, NRCS, Gorham

Massachusetts

Coordinator: Donald Liptack, NRCS, Barnstable
Facilitator: Paul Fischer, FSA, Westford

Michigan

Coordinator: Christina Coulon, NRCS, Charlotte
Facilitators: Dale Allen, FSA, Kingsford; Helen Baker, Rural Development, Flint; Elizabeth Lake, FSA, Marshall; Kimberly Neumann, NRCS, Mason

Minnesota

Coordinator: Joseph Wiltsey, NRCS, Brainerd
Facilitators: Mary Aukes, FSA, Mankato; Kevin Bergquist, FSA, Buffalo; Malinda Dexter, NRCS, Wadena; Ward Eichhorst, Rural Development, Cambridge; Dan Hockert, FSA, St. Paul; Glen Kajewski, NRCS, Thief River; Julie MacSwain, NRCS, Stillwater; Mary Moline, Rural Development, Cambridge; Helen Sussenguth, FSA, Breckenridge

Missouri

Coordinator: James Gosche, Rural Development, Farmington
Facilitators: Harold Butler, FSA, St. Louis; Tammy Crawford, FSA, Osceola; Jerry Finley, Rural Development, Springfield; David Howard, NRCS, Warrensburg; Patricia Hufford, NRCS, Mount Vernon; Dennis Johnson, FSA, West Plains; Melvin Lee, NRCS, St. Joseph; Mark Palm, NRCS, Troy; Paul Wilmes, Rural Development, St. Joseph

Nebraska

Coordinator: Patty Enevoldsen, NRCS, Lincoln
Facilitators: Deb Clifford, FSA, Hayes Center; Teri Edeal, NRCS, Lexington; Glen Einspahr, NRCS, Neligh; Marilyn Geier, NRCS, Lincoln; Peggy Haussermann, FSA, Franklin; Denise Lickteig, FSA,

continued on page 2

Also in this issue...

Reinvention Revolution..Page 2

Are You an Office Slob?..Page 3

How About A Date?...Page 4

Auburn; Bob Nagel, FSA, Kimball; Mark Nowack, NRCS, Battle Creek; Ross Scott, NRCS, Tecumseh

North Carolina

Coordinator: Linda Florian, Rural Development, Jacksonville
Facilitators: Anita Burleson, Rural Development, Burnsville; Monica Castelloe, Rural Development, Winton; Russell Lyday, NRCS, Morganton; Pat Mabry, FSA, Trenton; Phyllis Ruth, FSA, Durham

Ohio

Coordinator: Latawnya Dia, NRCS, Columbus
Facilitators: Christopher Gibbs, FSA, Celina; Pam Hiser, Rural Development, Springfield; Denise Hobbs, Rural Development, Columbus; Bill Huston, FSA, Zanesville; Karen McAlister, NRCS, Troy; Tom Perrin, NRCS, Wintersville

Oregon

Coordinator: Shirley Stinson, NRCS, Bend

Facilitators: Patty Good, Rural Development, La Grande; Tim Gray, FSA, Tualatin; Susan Hudson, SWCD, Oregon City

Puerto Rico

Coordinators: Wilson Almodovar, Rural Development, Juana Diaz
Facilitator: Elis Marrero, Rural Development, Corozal

South Carolina

Coordinator: Timothy Chandler, Rural Development, Columbia
Facilitators: Robert Blackwell, FSA, Anderson; Michele Cardwell, Rural Development, Aiken; Eloise McRae, FSA, Lancaster

Utah

Coordinator: Colleen O'Brien, Rural Development, Salt Lake City
Facilitators: Niels Hansen, NRCS, Ogden; Jesse Warnick, FSA, South Jordan

Washington

Coordinator: Dean White, NRCS, Spokane

Facilitators: Melissa Cummings, FSA, Spokane; Scott Hallett, FSA, Spokane; C. June Johnson, NRCS, Colfax; Trinidad Mayo, Rural Development, Wenatchee

West Virginia

Facilitators: Tammy Bostic, FSA, Hamlin; Susan Jones, Rural Development, Moundsville

Wisconsin

Facilitator: Linda DiPietro, NRCS, Madison

Wyoming

Coordinator: Debra Reed, FSA, Casper
Facilitators: Edith Bennett, NRCS, Casper; Shanna Gibbs, Rural Development; Worland



USDA Service Center Team Participates at Second Annual Reinvention Revolution Conference

The Second Annual Reinvention Revolution Conference, "Strategies and Tactics for the 21st Century," was held on April 7-9, at the Natcher Conference Center, National Institutes of Health campus, Bethesda, MD.

A live satellite town hall meeting featuring Vice President Al Gore and successful Federal government reinventors kicked-off the three-day conference, attended by Service Center Implementation, Change Management Team Leader, Kathy Huey. Other highlights of the conference included presentations by John Kotter, Harvard Business

School, author of Leading Change; Rodney E. Slater, Secretary of the Department of Transportation; Franklin Raines, Director of the Office of Management and Budget; Federal Emergency Management Agency staff; and Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Department of the Interior.

The spirit of the meeting was probably best captured in the President's words in the Forward to the Blair House Papers. "The era of big government is over, but the era of big challenges is not. People want smaller government, but they also want active and

effective national leadership. They want government that provides them the means and opportunities to meet their responsibilities and solve their own problems.

That's why Vice President Al Gore and I have spent so much time and energy in the first term reinventing government -- making it work better, but cost less. We have had some terrific help from the Administration's management team as well as the career Federal workforce. I want to thank and congratulate everyone who helped."

Are You an Office Slob?

By **Kate Murphy**

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Justin O'Brien's office used to be so littered with papers and products that he couldn't walk around without hurting himself. But the CEO of Sun-Fun Corp., a sporting-goods catalog business in San Carlos, CA, has -- for the most part -- cleaned up his act. O'Brien claims he tossed away 750 pounds of unneeded stuff. Conquering clutter has not only saved O'Brien's shins and elbows. The time it takes to process a customer order has also fallen from two weeks to two days. American workers are messier than ever, according to the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO), which grew from 5 office straighteners a dozen years ago to a staff of more than 800 today.

Paying Pros

Yet O'Brien and other "recovering chaotics" have seen what a little neatness can do toward tidying a company's bottom line. Rather than drown in a sea of spread sheets and sticky notes, many "messaholics" are paying \$20 to \$200 per hour to hire professional organizers whose effectiveness varies as widely as their fees.

But imposing order may not require professional help. With a little resolve and lot of trash bags, even a slob can do it.

This may be the age of computers and digital scanners, but a decidedly low-tech approach is the first step toward combating clutter. "Learn the art of wastebasketry," says Barbara Hemphill, a professional organizer in Raleigh, NC., and author of Taming the

Paper Tiger (\$13 Kiplinger Books). In her experience, 80 percent of office clutter belongs in the trash. "Take no prisoners," Hemphill says. Pitch items that are not time-sensitive, that are available elsewhere, or that have no tax or legal implications.

Next, place papers in one box and objects such as staplers, punchers, souvenirs, and the like in another, advises Karla Jones, a professional organizer in San Mateo, CA. Sort through the boxes with a 30-gallon trash can at the ready and if you find yourself agonizing over whether to keep a file or a report for very long, you can probably deep-six it. Although it sounds severe, pare down family pictures and personal items as well. "More than one memento equals clutter," says Jones.

If raking everything into two piles seems unwieldy, "start with just a corner of your desk, and when you get to a clear spot, start working on another part," says Stephanie Winston, author of Stephanie Winston's Best Organizing Tips (\$11 Simon & Schuster).. Organizing can be done in stages. Try dedicating just 15 minutes a day to the cause.

A decent filing system helps too, of course. File by project date, or even color (red folders for bills, blue for clients, etc.) If your system results in file folders that contain only a page or two, you're being a bit overzealous. On the other hand, files with more than 30 pieces of paper should be broken down into subcategories. Stamp a date on documents so it's easy to tell if the information is fresh. Whenever handling a file, check if there are papers inside that can be tossed.

Schedule time to purge files at

least once a year. Two possibilities are the period between the year-end holidays or on slow Fridays in the summer.

Think also about novel ways to store the stuff you feel compelled to keep. Stacks of neatly labeled cardboard boxes or milk crates will often suffice. And standard shoe bags draped over the side of a cubicle or hanging from a wall hook, can provide numerous nooks for storing envelopes, computer disks, and other office necessities. "People really don't consider the storage possibilities of walls," says Sally Schulman, who specializes in maximizing space as owner of a White Rabbit Home Offices in Deerfield, IL.

To unclutter further, stop jotting down thoughts, to do lists, or phone numbers on the backs of envelopes, sticky notes, or other bits of paper. Instead, consolidate jottings in a daily planner or spiral notebook. Personal information-management software programs (Lotus Organizer, Starfish Sidekick, Day-Timer Organizer) also provide a paperless means for storing notes and phone numbers. Take a pair of scissors to all those magazines piling up and clip out articles of interest. "Stash them in a file that you can grab on your way to catching the train," says Stephanie Denton, an organizing consultant based in Cincinnati.

After things are thrown out or put away, remember that remaining orderly is a never-ending battle. Managing office clutter is like weeding a garden, says O'Brien, the Sun-Fun CEO. "You've got to say on top of it because clutter, like weeds, just keeps on coming." The trick is to yank it up before it spreads.

USDA Service Center Technology to Match Changed Culture

By Jennifer Eddy
Rural Development Public Affairs Staff

New communications technology helping field employees do their jobs better will soon merge with the changing culture of local offices in the USDA Service Center implementation effort.

While many offices on the local level share program information and refer callers between agencies, the Secretary's Service Center mandate provides the impetus for agencies to develop and implement a nationwide standard in communications technology.

Almost three years ago, Secretary Glickman called for "one-stop shopping" at USDA Service Centers. The core effort initially involved Rural Development, the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The "centralization effort" has been expanded to include, wherever practical, other USDA agencies, including the Forest Service (FS) and partner organizations such as Cooperative Extension Services and conservation district offices in the States.

New technology will allow offices to transfer calls between agencies. The Service Center's LAN/WAN/Voice team has targeted Rural Development field offices with the Dedicated Loan Origination and Servicing (DLOS) system to receive priority installation of the first voice and data communication technology.

The Nevada Rural Develop-

ment State Director, Sarah Mersereau, praised the new installation of the LAN/WAN/Voice project and the change management/team building customer service training affiliated with Service Center implementation. "Interaction is the key. The more mechanisms that help us act as one USDA rather than three separate agencies, the better," said Mersereau.

The Service Center concept enhances existing positive relationships on the local levels, according to Mersereau. "Many employees are already working together between agencies to a positive degree. Yet, if we could get more levels of authority and empowerment among the agencies, we could go even further in creating efficient customer service." Mersereau said.

How About a Date?

Service Center News is looking for events of interest to everyone involved in the USDA Service Center implementation effort in order to start a regular Upcoming Events feature. Don't feel you have to limit yourself to internal agency meetings. Include partner functions and other professional gatherings which would be useful for anyone involved with the Service Center effort. Be sure to include the name of the event; the sponsoring organization; date(s); location (city and State) -- including the name of the hotel or convention center where the event is being held;

and the name, phone, fax, and e-mail of an individual to contact for more information. Send your event information to USDA, National FAC, *SC News*, attn: Fred Jacobs, Stop 0199, room 4422-S, Washington, DC 20250-0199. Phone: 202-690-0177; fax: 202-720-6101; or e-mail: fred.jacobs@usda.gov.

Service Centers News

is a publication of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Food and Agriculture Council (FAC). Its purpose is to report progress of USDA Service Centers implementation to employees. Mail or fax questions or comments to the Executive Officer.

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