

HR Exchange

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First Quarter 2003

ICE Streamlines Process

Hank Batty, OPM

On January 22, 2003, OPM implemented 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. Applicants testing in ICE will also go on the register for that job on the same day they tested.

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 using the ICE System will still receive a letter in the mail informing them of their test scores, their final earned ratings, and their rankings on the registers.

On January 22, three tests covering 15 job families were released in the ICE system for applicant testing. As of March 12, 2003, 32 tests were available to applicants in the ICE system. These 32 tests are assigned to 90 registers in 41 job families. Most of the

90 registers are open for recruitment at this time; the number of open registers using each test range from 1 - 13. Applicants have taken 710 tests in the new system.

Currently, applicants must come to the Jim Thorpe Building in Oklahoma City to take a Merit System exam on a computer, but in the near future the ICE System will be available at the Career Technology Centers that administer Merit System exams. "We are very excited about this new technology," commented Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., OPM Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration, "and the improved service it provides to our customers—both applicants and agencies."

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

OPM State EAP Provides Services for OKC Agency

Kimberlee Williams, OPM

OPM and the Oklahoma City Housing Authority (OCHA) have entered into an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement through which OPM will provide Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services to OCHA employees for a fee.

"This is really a win-win situation," said Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., OPM Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration. "This agreement allows OCHA to provide this benefit for its employees at a lower cost than that of other sources, while at the same time generating revenue for OPM."

Under the terms of the agreement, OPM will provide assessment, referral, consultation, and problem-resolution assistance to OCHA employees and their family members seeking help with medical or mental health problems, alcohol and drug abuse, emotional, marital, familial, financial, or other personnel problems. OPM will also provide assistance and training to OCHA supervisors in effectively managing "troubled" employees.

"The purpose of any EAP program is to provide assistance to employees whose personal problems may adversely affect the employee's job performance, as well as to help supervisors effectively manage those employees," commented Robert Stevens, Coordinator of the OPM State EAP. "My staff and I are thrilled to provide this service to OCHA employees."

The staff of the OPM State EAP has already been on site at OCHA, making brief presentations at employee insurance meetings to inform OCHA employees of the services available to them through this agreement. "We were extremely well-received at these briefings," said Deanna Miller, OPM EAP Representative. "The OCHA staff seem really pleased to have us on board."



The first applicant to take a Merit System exam using the ICE System was Jenny Elliott. Ms. Elliott took the exam for Administrative Technician and pronounced the ICE system "very easy to use."

The HRDS Spring Semester began on March 5. Courses are open for enrollment until April 15. For more information, log onto the OPM Website (www.opm.state.ok.us) and open the link entitled "HRDS Announces Spring Training Schedule" under "Did You Know."

From the Desk of the Administrator

Well, it's another legislative session—the First Session of the 49th Oklahoma Legislature—and another administration—Brad Henry was sworn in as the 26th Governor of the state of Oklahoma on January 13, 2003—and it would seem, to some, that all things are new again. At least that appears to be the case when one reviews many of the HR-related bills that have been introduced thus far during the legislative session. Though many of the players are new, at least in their current roles, I have received no indication from various members of the Legislature or the Governor that good government is no longer the order of the day.

Currently, OPM is tracking approximately 50 HR-related bills. Most bills on the list apply across-the-board to all state agencies. Others are “single-constituent bills” that impact one state agency or a small group of state employees. In addition to tracked bills, which amend the Oklahoma Personnel Act, direct OPM or the Administrator to take action of some kind, or seek to alter in some way the state Merit System, we also keep an eye on bills closely related to HR, e.g., retirement, benefits, state government technology, ethics, Open Records Act, Open Meetings Act, Administrative Procedures Act, purchasing, etc. Currently, we are monitoring 30 such bills.

Because of the number of HR-related bills that have been introduced this session, and because of the impact their passage could have on the state personnel system, we have decided to provide information regarding this legislation via e-mail to the HR directors of all Merit System agencies. We e-mailed this “Major HR Legislation” list after both the first legislative deadline (February 20 was the last day for bills to pass out of committee in the house of origin) and the second legislative deadline (March 13 was the last day for bills to be voted out of the house of origin). We plan to continue this practice after each one of the remaining deadlines—April 3 (last day for bills to pass out of committee in the opposite house), April 24 (last day for bills to be voted out of the opposite house), and May 1 (last day to request conference). The last day of session is scheduled for May 30, 2003.

I would like to encourage you to com-

municate with the authors of the bills on the list below regarding your thoughts on the legislation to which they have lent their names and support.

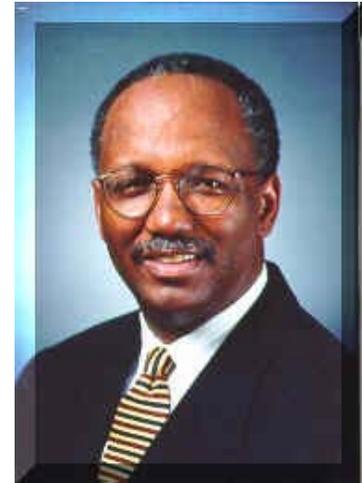
OPM communicates with the Governor regarding every piece of legislation that has a potential HR impact. We also discuss legislative provisions with legislators and often suggest alternate ways to approach the issues raised in various bills. It is OPM's responsibility to comment and try to help ensure that the measures that become law do not adversely affect the state government personnel system. But, we can't do it alone. We need your help. Let the members of the Legislature and the Governor hear from you regarding the legislation that will have an impact on the way we do business. After all, we will all have to live with the consequences.

2003 Major HR Bills

House Bill 1039 (Erwin/Corn) requires that each classified employee who is on-call be compensated for a minimum of two hours of work anytime the employee reports to a work location while on-call.

House Bill 1058 (Ellis/Corn) permits state employees to discuss state agency operations and functions with members of the “print or electronic media”.

House Bill 1086 (Carey/Gumm) defines “reorganization” as the “planned elimination, addition, or redistribution of functions or duties either wholly within an agency, any of its subdivisions, or between agencies,” and provides severance benefits for employees affected by a “reorganization or any other action by an agency which results in affected positions being abolished and affected employees being severed from



state service.”

House Bill 1101 (Easley/Corn) limits the term of a Merit Protection Commission (MPC) member to 12 years. Gives MPC jurisdiction over agency grievances that are not completed within 45 calendar days, and requires the Commission to complete its investigation of an appeal within 90 days after receipt of the appeal. Prescribes a procedure for MPC to follow when issuing Final Petition Decisions.

House Bill 1114 (Erwin/Gumm) requires state agencies to permit certain product vendors “reasonable access” to state employees for the purpose of providing information concerning their products. Clarifies that access will be during scheduled breaks or immediately before or after normal work hours, and during each shift in 24-hour state facilities.

House Bill 1127 (Lerblance/Gumm) requires the Merit Protection Commission to adopt rules prohibiting supervisors from considering incidents that occurred longer

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than 4 years before an offense in order to move to a higher level of discipline. Prohibition does not apply to: criminal activity, sexual misconduct and/or harassment, racially discriminatory behavior and/or harassment, threats of violence against employees in the workplace, and drug and/or alcohol use or abuse on the job.

House Bill 1553 (McIntyre/Horner) creates a "Shared Leave Pool" and permits state employees to donate annual or sick leave to this "pool" that could be used by state employees who are eligible for shared leave. Requires the OPM Administrator to determine which state employees would receive the shared leave in the "pool".

House Bill 1744 (Doug Miller/Nichols) requires (1) OPM to design a performance management system for all state agencies that provides for the identification of accountabilities and a mid-term interview, and (2) that employees be rated annually "on a twelve-month period" following the end of the probationary period. Also strikes the prohibition against MPC having jurisdiction to investigate or hear appeals of individual service ratings.

House Bill 1800 (Carey/Monson) creates the "State Classification Task Force" to review state unclassified positions and make recommendations to the Legislature concerning the current unclassified service and the feasibility of proposals to unclassify positions in the state service.

Senate Bill 212 (Monson/Sweeden) authorizes agencies to grant an employee's request to take a six-month leave of absence without pay to run for political office, and prohibits the agency from canceling the leave after it has been approved.

Senate Bill 421 (Gumm/Carey) requires that skill-based and equity-based salary adjustments, other than lump-sum payments, become permanent after 24 months and may not be taken away if an agency conducts a furlough or reduction-in-force.

Senate Bill 453 (Morgan/Askins) authorizes all state employees hired after June 30, 2003, to begin participating in the direct deposit payroll system within five years of their employment with the state.

Senate Bill 642 (Corn/Ray Miller) requires state agencies to implement a voluntary furlough before implementing an involuntary furlough and requires state agen-

cies to allow a state employee to take leave without pay for up to one year if elected or appointed to an employee organization.

Senate Bill 647 (Leftwich/Hefner) requires that leave accrual for state employees be based upon hours worked, paid leave, and holidays, but excluding overtime, not to exceed the total possible work hours for the month.

Senate Bill 649 (Coffee/Askins) abolishes the Employees Benefits Council (EBC) and the Wellness Council and transfers the responsibilities of both entities to the Oklahoma State and Education Employees Group Insurance Board (OSEEGIB). Provides for the transfer of EBC and Wellness Council "positions identified as unique essential functions" to OSEEGIB at the same job level and rate of pay.

Senate Bill 703 (Leftwich/Braddock) clarifies that "acting incumbents" (individuals hired as unclassified employees to temporarily fill positions vacated by state employees who are on military duty) are entitled to benefits and pay adjustments, e.g., approved differentials and lump-sum adjustments. Clarifies that state agencies, rather than OPM, are required to accept online or electronically submitted forms from the Oklahoma Public Employees Association and other state employee associations. Clarifies that the Administrator's authority to adopt leave regulations includes furlough, which is leave without pay. Transfers the remaining responsibilities of the Human Resources Management Advisory Committee (HRMAC) to the OPM Administrator—model projects, delegation of personnel functions, and the Human Resource Management Plan and Self-Evaluation Report system for agencies. Clarifies that an Employee Assistance Program professional may not be compelled by subpoena to testify concerning the contents of confidential records. Extends the confidentiality afforded to the home addresses, home telephone numbers, and social security numbers of current and former state employees to information related to personal electronic communication devices, e.g., cell phone numbers, pager numbers, etc., of current and former state employees. Removes all references to unclassified employees from the RIF provisions of the Oklahoma Personnel Act. Requires agencies to post a RIF notice and send this notice to the Adminis-

trator, and gives agencies five days after the posting of the notice to post the RIF implementation plan. Permits agencies to provide severance benefits to regular unclassified employees with one year or more continuous state service who are separated for budgetary reasons. Clarifies that an affected employee who is re-employed by the agency from which separated as a result of a RIF within one year of separation must repay all severance benefits received on a proportional basis. Permits intermittent Mentor Executive rotations. Strikes the requirement that agencies post vacancy notices "conspicuously in transparent, secured enclosures situated in prominent locations throughout the agency", and adds the requirement that agencies describe in their promotional plan the method by which all agency employees will be notified of vacancy announcements; requires that promotional postings include a listing of job title, major work duties, and minimum qualifications, instead of the job family descriptor. Requires the OPM Administrator to prescribe a form agencies must use to confirm that they are in compliance with the law requiring performance appraisals. Requires the Director of the Office of State Finance to review and reject any severance benefits plan for unclassified employees that does not meet certain requirements. Clarifies that the provisions of the RIF law do not apply to unclassified employees. Provides agencies a way to fill positions temporarily vacated by employees on military leave with current agency employees. Adds nurses to the list of discretionary unclassified positions.

Editor's Note: You may view the bills listed above, as well as other legislation, on the Legislative Service Bureau Website at www.lsb.state.ok.us. If you have any questions regarding HR-related legislation, please contact Dayna R. Petete, OPM Assistant Administrator for Communications and Legislative Liaison, at (405) 521-6293, or dayna.petete@opm.state.ok.us.

OPM will host a public hearing on proposed permanent and emergency amendments to the Merit Rules at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 20, 2003, in the Concourse Theater, Sequoyah/Will Rogers Concourse. You may view the proposed amendments on the OPM Website (www.opm.state.ok.us) under "Did You Know?" | OPM Schedules Rules Hearing.

Surveys: More Than Just Feedback

Robert Stevens, OPM

Have you ever received a survey?

I recently received a survey asking about the services provided by a referral source. I tossed it aside, thinking I was too busy to fill it out.

As I was writing this article, I remembered that survey and one of the reasons a survey is sent out in the first place: to provide useful information to an organization about the type of relationship it has with its customers/clients. I also remembered the survey the OPM State Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has distributed to our clients through the years, and the fact that we have never been satisfied with the relatively small number of responses we receive. I guess other people respond to surveys the way I responded to the one I received from the referral source. (By the way, I sat right down, filled out that survey, and returned it!)

Since proper feedback has always been important to the EAP staff, we have teamed up with OPM's Workforce Planning unit to develop a more structured survey that will provide in-depth analysis to the EAP staff regarding the services we provide. Questions will be formulated to allow the EAP staff to analyze and assess customer satisfaction both on a macro and a micro level, and determine if any gaps exist between customer satisfaction and EAP services.

According to OPM's Workforce Planning Analyst James Perez, workforce planning researchers use surveys as one of their benchmark instruments in gathering data. Particularly with customer/client satisfaction surveys, the data that is extracted from these instruments allows organizations to measure customer/client perceptions of how well an organization delivers its services, whether the employees of the organization show proper courtesy and appreciation towards the customer, whether the organization has an overall understanding of the customer's problems, etc. By determining which factors produce the highest perceived value by customers, surveys can provide the knowledge to both correct deficiencies in an organization's customer service and assist in building high-value strategic customer

service offerings for the future.

One of the most important attributes of any customer satisfaction survey is the integrity of the survey. In order to guarantee the confidentiality mandated by state law regarding all matters related to the OPM State EAP, the EAP survey will possess the following safeguards:

- The survey will not require the respondents to identify themselves on the survey.
- Only selected members of the EAP will be allowed to view and analyze the survey information.
- Security measures such as passwords and limited accessibility will be implemented so that only customers/clients will be able to answer the survey. (This feature is important since the EAP is hoping to develop a web-based survey.)

We believe that the EAP survey will give our clients an opportunity to provide valuable input on the types of services we provide and the type of staff we need to provide these services. Most importantly, this tool will give the EAP staff a better perception of what our clientele needs today to deal with specific issues and how the EAP can play an important role in assisting them with these issues in order to ensure a better tomorrow.

Tax Credit Provides Relief for Working Families

OPM All Appointing Authorities
Memo 03-10

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a credit for lower-income individuals and families. Congress originally approved the tax credit legislation in 1975 in part to offset the burden of Social Security taxes and to provide an incentive to work. The credit reduces the amount of federal tax owed and can result in a refund check.

According to 2000 IRS tax return data for Oklahoma City, 51 percent of filing taxpayers were eligible for the credit. The IRS estimates that approximately \$18.5 million in refunds was not received in Oklahoma City due to lack of knowledge of the program. If all of those eligible took advantage of the EITC, over \$86 million would be paid to working citizens in Oklahoma City.

The City of Oklahoma City is supporting efforts by the IRS to increase public awareness and use of the EITC, focusing on:

- Assisting the IRS in working with local businesses, education, and non-profit organizations;
- Providing information to the community at large;
- Providing information to persons in tar-

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James Perez, OPM Workforce Planning Analyst, and Robert Stevens, OPM State EAP Coordinator, discuss the EAP survey they teamed up to improve.

Tax Credit, continued from page 4

geted lower-income neighborhoods; and

- Providing information to City of Oklahoma City employees.

OPM has joined the City of Oklahoma City in supporting IRS efforts related to the EITC.

Information about the Earned Income Tax Credit and free Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites may be accessed at www.irs.gov. For additional information about local VITA sites and flyers/handouts to post in your agencies, please access www.workforceokc.org.

CORE Training Begins

Larry Fisher, OPM

Training began on March 17, 2003, for state employees who will serve as Subject Matter Experts and Trainers for the CORE Oklahoma/PeopleSoft enterprise resource planning (ERP) system that is designed to integrate and upgrade the state of Oklahoma's human resources, procurement, and financials systems. End-User training will begin April 7 and continue through June 27. Over 400 days of training have been scheduled for approximately 7,000 participants.

There will be additional training after the July 1 PeopleSoft implementation date for new staff and for additional phases of the PeopleSoft ERP system as those are implemented.

For additional information on CORE Oklahoma, log onto <http://www.youroklahoma.com/coreoklahoma>.



The Oklahoma Employees Credit Union (OECU) will hold its "Oklahoma Employee's 50th Annual Meeting" at the Coca-Cola Event Center in Bricktown on Saturday, March 29, from 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm, with registration beginning at 3:00 pm. The meeting and entertainment is free for OECU members. The cost for the buffet is \$5.00 and will be taken out of each member's OECU account one week before the event. Individuals wishing to attend must RSVP by calling (405) 606-6328 or 877-648-6328, or registering online at www.occu.org.

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Katie Splawn Retires

Dayna Petete, OPM

Long-time state employee Katie Splawn retired from state service on December 31, 2002. Ms. Splawn began her state government career in 1975 as a typist clerk at the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture. She was steadily promoted to various HR positions with increasing influence and responsibility; when she left the agency in September 1998, she served as Personnel Manager. From February 1998 to September 1998, she was "loaned" to OPM's Compensation Division via the State Personnel Interchange Program to assist with the Classification and Compensation Study. This study culminated in the passage of the Classification and Compensation Reform Act of 1999—one of the most significant pieces of HR legislation in the history of the state Merit System. When Katie left OPM in 1998, she went to the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission as an Assistant HR Program Manager; in January 1, 2001, she assumed the overall HR managerial duties at the Commission.

Ms. Splawn was active in the Oklahoma Public Personnel Association (now the Oklahoma Public Human Resources Association) since its inception in 1986, and served as president in 1992 and 1998.



Linda Hall, State Department of Education, and Katie Splawn, formerly of the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, and now retired.

In addition, Ms. Splawn was co-chair, with Linda Hall, Executive Director of Human Resources for the State Department of Education, of the Host Committee for the 2001 IPMA-HR Southern Region Conference, which was held in Oklahoma City, and was co-winner, also with Ms. Hall, of the 2001 Southern Region *Edwin L. Swain Outstanding Member Award*.



On January 24, 2003, Mitch Parsons, Executive Director of the Employees Benefits Council (EBC), and Russell Nash, Contracts Administrator for EBC, spoke to members of the OPM Management Team regarding "Consumer-Driver HealthCare". Consumer-driven health plans expose participants to the actual cost of certain health care services without exposing them to all the financial risks associated with health care costs incurred during any given year. The goal of such plans is to educate employees about the actual costs of health care goods and services and make them more accountable for the health care dollars being spent on their behalf. Pictured (l to r) are Mitch Parsons, Russell Nash, and Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., OPM Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration.

Rohr Chairs Idaho Accreditation Team

Carrie Rohr, Coordinator of the state of Oklahoma's Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program, served as chair of the accreditation team for the Idaho CPM Program. During her site visit to Idaho in January, Ms. Rohr interviewed advisory board members, CPM candidates, agency directors, and instructors. The review is a requirement for accreditation by the National Certified Public Manager Consortium. Once a state receives initial accreditation, programs are re-evaluated every five years to ensure consortium requirements are met.

The Idaho Division of Human Resources administers the Idaho CPM program. The Program, which is administered by Ann Heilman and Connie Pratt, was established by Executive Order on December 29, 2000, by Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne.

For information regarding Oklahoma's CPM Program, contact Carrie Rohr at (405) 521-6344, or carrie.rohr@opm.state.ok.us.

NASPE Sponsoring State Employee Recognition Day

Dayna Petete, OPM

The National Association of State Personnel Executives (NASPE) is sponsoring *State Employee Recognition Day* on Wednesday, May 7, 2003, to recognize the outstanding work of the more than two million state employees across the country. NASPE's *Guide to State Employee Recognition Day* is available on the NASPE Website at www.naspe.net.

This is the third year NASPE has sponsored *State Employee Recognition Day*, which is celebrated in conjunction with *Public Service Recognition Week*. This year *Public Service Recognition Week* will be celebrated May 5 – 9.

State Employee Recognition Day is a real opportunity to express appreciation to the thousands of men and women who have made a personal and professional commitment to serve well the citizens of the state of Oklahoma.



On November 12, 2002, Governor Frank Keating hosted the Oklahoma Quality Award Luncheon in the Phillips Pavilion, located on the grounds of the Governor's Mansion. Pictured with Governor Keating are Oklahoma Quality Award Foundation Board members (l to r) Bill McKamey, American Electric Power-Public Service Company of Oklahoma; Vikki Dearing, Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education; Ron Bussert, Oklahoma Department of Commerce; Governor Keating; Mike Strong, Oklahoma Quality Awards Foundation, Inc.; Yash Fozdar, Celesica; Dave Ferren, Xerox Corporation; Paula Marshall-Chapman, The Bama Companies; and Oscar Jackson, Oklahoma Office of Personnel Management. Not pictured are Mike Elvir, Bank of Oklahoma; Roy Peters, The Oklahoma Alliance for Manufacturing Excellence; Jim Williams, Oklahoma Foundation for Medical Quality; Rocky Flick, Blitz, USA; and Valinda Rutledge, St. Anthony's Hospital.

Oklahoma Quality Award Foundation Announces 2002 Board Members

From the Oklahoma Department of Commerce—December 16, 2002

On December 16, 2002, the Oklahoma Quality Award Foundation announced five new appointments to its Board of Directors:

- Vikki Dearing, Interim Manager of Business and Industry Development at the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, Stillwater, Oklahoma,
- Mike Elvir, Executive Vice President for Operations and Technology and Chief Information Officer for Bank of Oklahoma, Tulsa, Oklahoma,
- Rocky Flick, President, Blitz U.S.A., Inc., Miami, Oklahoma,
- Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., Secretary of Human Resources and Administrator of the Office of Personnel Management for the State of Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and
- Jim L. Williams, President and CEO of

the Oklahoma Foundation for Medical Quality (OFMQ), Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

"These new Board members bring an exciting new view to the Foundation's perspective and direction. As previous winners, as industry leaders, and as Oklahomans committed to progress, they will make a very valuable contribution. We are very fortunate to have their talents channeled in our direction," said Paula Marshall-Chapman, chair of the Foundation's Board of Directors and CEO of The Bama Companies.

Vikki Dearing has been with the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education for 25 years. Previously, Dearing held positions in the private sector in manufacturing. She is active in state and national economic development and training organizations.

Mike Elvir joined Bank of Oklahoma

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in July of 1997. Previously, Elvir held positions with Banc One, the Bank of New Orleans and IBM. He is a graduate of Loyola University with a degree in Physics.

Rocky Flick has been with Blitz U.S.A. since 1988 and worked his way through the ranks of the company to become president. Flick began his career in the plastics industry with Rubbermaid where he held several marketing positions.

Oscar Jackson began his career in public service at the University of Oklahoma where he served as Manager of Employment Services for the Norman Campus. Both Governor David Walters and Governor Frank Keating appointed Jackson to his current position. *[Editor's Note: On January 21, 2003, Governor Brad Henry appointed Oscar Jackson OPM Administrator and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration.]*

Jim Williams has served the state of Oklahoma in his present capacity since 1988. Before joining OFMQ, Williams served as COO of a quality improvement organization and in an administrative capacity for a large urban hospital system.

The Oklahoma Quality Award Foundation is a public non-profit organization formed in 1993 to recognize and support Oklahoma organizations using performance excellence tools. The governor has presented the Oklahoma Quality Award since 1994. The Award criteria and evaluation process is patterned after the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award presented by the President and U.S. Department of Commerce every year.

For more information about the Foundation, please contact Mike Strong at (405) 748-6840 or Mike.Strong@OklahomaQuality.com, or visit the Foundation's web site at www.OklahomaQuality.com.

OPM and the Oklahoma City Housing Authority (OCHA) have entered into an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement under which OPM will provide Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services to OCHA employees for a fee (see story on page 1). Pictured (l to r) are Philip Lloyd, OCHA Personnel/EEO Officer; Robert Stevens, OPM State EAP Coordinator; and James Borgstadt, OCHA Controller.

USDOL Launches Website to Help Employers, Job Seekers

From U.S. Dept. of Labor—March 11, 2003

On March 11, 2003, Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao announced the release of O*NET OnLine 4.0, the U.S. Department of Labor's latest career exploration and human resource tool for employers and job seekers.

O*NET—the Occupational Information Network—is a comprehensive data base of worker attributes and job characteristics. O*NET OnLine 4.0, the data base's computerized application, has been updated and streamlined with enhanced features to make it faster and easier to use.

O*NET OnLine 4.0 equips employers with management and human resource tools, such as knowledge, skill, ability, and task information, that can help grow their businesses. Job seekers can use O*NET to learn skill requirements for particular fields. O*NET also offers targeted links to other valuable Internet resources, including wage and occupational trend information and job accommodations for those with disabilities.

"O*NET OnLine 4.0 turns mountains of occupational information into timely, targeted intelligence quickly and efficiently," said Assistant Secretary Emily Stover DeRocco, head of the department's Employment and Training Administration. "This tool identifies the requirements of the 21st century workplace so that both employers and job seekers can speak the same language about job opportunities. Hiring better suited workers increases the job satisfaction of workers and retention for employers."

O*Net OnLine 4.0 helps users analyze and understand occupational information and provides a key decision support system for human resource professionals, industry analysts, line managers and other professionals. Other benefits include:

- A streamlined homepage with user-friendly interfaces and easier navigation;
- A more powerful search engine that finds occupational information through related job titles, descriptions, skills, and tasks;
- Flexible report options that users can access and customize with fewer screen clicks;
- Direct links to other DOL Online products such as CareerOneStop; and
- Direct links from listed occupations to information on apprenticeship opportunities.

"This tool increases the chances that every new hire is a good fit for both the employer and the worker. We're really proud to make this valuable resource available to businesses and workers," DeRocco said.



Advisory Council Discusses Driver License Testing and English-Only Bill

Capitol Network News—January 27, 2003

Editor's Note: OPM provides staff support to the Governor's Advisory Council on Latin American and Hispanic Affairs.

On January 27, 2003, members of the Governor's Advisory Council on Latin American and Hispanic Affairs learned that funding is not available to implement state mandated Spanish language driver license testing.

Karen Gentry, director of driver license testing for the Department of Public Safety, stated that she is committed to implementing the Spanish tests, but due to budget constraints there is no funding to buy the machines necessary to conduct the tests.

According to the report of the Council's subcommittee on the Spanish driving test, machines and software used to administer the tests could cost \$514,000. However, the report advocated alternate methods of testing.

"Why not allow them to take the tests on paper," asked Leo Mendoza, representative of the subcommittee on the Spanish driving test. He said the cost would be considerably less and that non-English speaking people could begin to take licensure tests sooner.

Other suggestions were heard from meeting attendees. Juanita Salazar Lamb, chair of the Council, questioned Gentry about an oral exam. An oral exam is offered to those who are illiterate and request the

exam orally. "Why couldn't a Spanish exam be administered orally," she asked.

Gentry answered that there are no bilingual staff members and, because of a hiring freeze, no new employees that are bilingual can be hired. She also stated there are no funds available to train current employees to administer the exams in Spanish.

The Council posed other suggestions to Gentry. One suggestion was to send volunteers from the Spanish-speaking community to test sites to translate the exams. Gentry said having a translator administer tests was prohibited. Another proposal was to download the Spanish test onto another state computer and have a test administrator come once a week to conduct the exam. Gentry said she would take the suggestions into consideration.

The discussion relating to the implementation of Spanish drivers' license tests ended with a motion from Yolanda Charney, council member, to have Gentry contact the grant writer in her department to research and apply for grants that will fund the purchase of the necessary equipment for Spanish tests. The motion passed unanimously and Gentry will report to the council at the next meeting on April 14.

Members of the council also discussed House Bill 1020. This bill, authored by Rep. Ron Kirby, D-Lawton, proposes that all official state business be published in English and that "the English language is the official language of the State of Oklahoma."

Rep. Al Lindley, D-Oklahoma City, expressed his concern about the bill to committee members. "I think it's counterproductive and divisive," he said.

According to the last census, Lindley's district has the second highest Latino population in Oklahoma, and he told the

On January 24, 2003, Gary Jones, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Public Employees Association, briefed members of the OPM Management Team on initiatives OPEA will pursue during the 2003 legislative session.

council that he would do, "whatever it takes to kill it."

Rep. Lindley ended his address to the council by asking all of those in attendance to provide him with information and ideas so he will be able to fight this bill in committee.

Council member Yolanda Charney said Latino and Hispanic communities had been fighting legislation similar to this measure since 1997. Kirby unsuccessfully proposed similar bills in 1997 and 1998; however, this proposed measure would negate a bill passed last year to hold driver license examinations in Spanish. Driver licenses are official state business, Charney said, and Kirby's proposed legislation would mandate that such business be conducted only in English.

HB 1020 states that, "command of the English language is necessary to participate in and take full advantage of the opportunities afforded by American life." Within the measure it states that such rules would be put in place to encourage people to learn English.

Leo Mendoza, representative for the subcommittee on driver licenses and a member of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), said the legislation could prohibit non-English speakers from training for and receiving a driver license, but would not motivate those people to learn English. He said the measure would fill the streets with unlicensed drivers. He advocates instituting the Spanish driver license tests as soon as possible.

Editor's Note: Though HB 1020 passed the House Rules Committee on February 20 by a one-vote margin, on March 11, it was returned without explanation to the Committee by Rep. Ron Kirby, an action which, in effect, killed the bill.



Mandatory supervisory training reports for January 1, 2002, through December 30, 2002, are due April 30, 2003. Call Larry Fisher or Grayson Bedwell, OPM Human Resource Development Services Department, at (405) 521-2166, for more information.



Photo Courtesy of NASPE

Members of the National Association of State Personnel Executives (NASPE) gathered in Arlington, Virginia, January 31 - February 2, 2003, for the 2003 NASPE Mid-Year Meeting. Pictured (l to r) are NASPE President Sue Roberson, Indiana; NASPE President-Elect Jeff Schutt, Colorado; NASPE Past President Mollie Anderson, Iowa; and Oscar Jackson, Oklahoma.

OPM Assists Department of Health With Workforce Planning

James Perez, OPM

In September 2002, the State Department of Health (SDOH) solicited the help of OPM's Workforce Planning unit in initiating a workforce development planning process to address employee development issues for the current and future workforce of SDOH. The Plan will include the following major strategies within its workforce development: demand forecasting and future workforce profiling; supply projection and present profiling; analysis of any gaps that exist within the workforce; initiation of strategy developments to close workforce gaps; and evaluation of workforce solutions and implementation of any revisions.

The OPM Workforce Planning unit has provided demographic information regarding the SDOH workforce in order to assess current workforce profiles and supply pro-

jections for the upcoming fiscal years. These profiles include employee age, retirement eligibility, turnover, ethnic and gender representation, and years of service. The workforce profiling also includes an environmental scan for SDOH nurses, which is one of the agency's most critical job families.

Additionally, the Workforce Planning unit will be working with OPM's Personnel Assessment Division in developing assessment tools that will assist SDOH in analyzing the necessary KSAs for the future workforce.

If you have any questions about the SDOH workforce development plan or about workforce planning, contact James Perez, OPM Workforce Planning, at (405) 521-6327.



Diane Biard-Holmes, State Department of Health; Diane Haser-Bennett, OPM; and James Perez, OPM.

Quality Oklahoma Team Day is May 8

Joyce Smith, OPM

Teamwork can be fulfilling and successful outcomes very rewarding. Teams are often the basic unit of work, with members outperforming expectations through cooperation and ingenuity. Team members report higher levels of job satisfaction, accountability, and ownership through their team projects.

Recognition of outstanding teams can be accomplished by participation in *Quality Oklahoma* Team Day. Agencies that acknowledge outstanding performance and successes build higher productivity and loyalty and can create patterns for desired performance that lead to organizational success. Nominating your agency team(s) for a *Governor's Commendation Award of Excellence* effectively and meaningfully demonstrates your appreciation of their contributions to the success of your agency's mission.

Quality Oklahoma Team Day will be observed at the state Capitol from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 8, 2003, with Team Day awards to be presented in the House Chambers at 2:30 p.m. This is an excellent, cost-effective way to boost your employees' morale and motivation, and at the same time have the opportunity to "brag" a bit about your agency's successful initiatives and accomplishments.

In 2002, 56 projects representing 18 different state agencies were displayed. Governor's Commendation Awards were presented for 33 projects, and six projects received specialty awards. Total projects documented a combined cost savings and revenue generation of more than \$35 million for the state of Oklahoma.

The deadline for Team Day 2003 applications is March 31, 2003. Information concerning *Quality Oklahoma* Team Day, including the application, is available on the OPM Website (www.opm.state.ok.us) under *Did You Know?/Quality Oklahoma Team Day Scheduled for May 8*.

If you have any questions about Team Day 2003, please contact Joyce Smith at (405) 522-3617. Thank you for your interest and participation in this worthwhile event.

OPM Committee Calendar

Affirmative Action Review Council
9/17/03, 10/15/03,
11/15/03, 12/17/03—2:00 p.m.
Department of Agriculture

**Agency Quality
Coordinators Network**
Meets at the call of the chair

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
4/23/03, 7/23/03, 10/22/03—10:00 a.m.
*Office of Personnel Management
Conference Room G-91*

**Governor's Advisory Council
on Asian-American Affairs**
4/25/03, 7/25/03, 10/24/03—2:00 p.m.
*Office of Personnel Management
Conference Room G-91*

**Governor's Advisory Council on
Latin-American & Hispanic Affairs**
4/14/03, 7/14/03, 10/27/03—2:00 p.m.
*Office of Personnel Management
Conference Room G-91*

**Human Resources Management
Advisory Committee**
Meets at the call of the chair

**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
5/14/03, 8/13/03, 11/12/03—2:00 p.m.
*Office of Personnel Management
Conference Room G-91*

**Oklahoma Commission
on the Status of Women**
3/27/03, 4/24/03, 5/22/03,
6/26/03, 7/24/03—1:30
State Capitol, Room 419C
8/28/03, 9/25/03,
10/23/03, 11/20/03—1:30 p.m.
*Office of Personnel Management
Conference Room G-91*

Calendar subject to change. Call (405) 521-2177 for most recent information concerning OPM Advisory Bodies and other entities staffed by OPM. Also, 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 December 2002

03-11 (3/13/03)
Proposed Amendments to the Merit Rules

03-10 (3/05/03)
Earned Income Tax Credit

03-09 (3/05/03)
*FY-2002 Oklahoma State Government
Equal Employment Opportunity/
Affirmative Action Status Report*

03-08 (2/24/03)
State Employee Recognition Day

03-07 (2/12/03)
*Statement of Support for the National Guard
and Reserve Military Forces*

03-06 (2/12/03)
Supervisory Training Requirement Report

03-05 (2/07/03)
Pay Movement Mechanism Usage Report

03-04 (2/06/03)
Quality Oklahoma Team Day 2003

03-03 (1/30/03)
State Agency Hiring Freeze Approval Process

03-02 (1/22/03)
CORE/General Ledger Overview Training

03-01 (1/02/03)
State Agency Hiring Freeze

Agency HR Changes Since December 2002

State Auditor & Inspector
*Nelda Gray
Auditor and Deputy Administrator
Retired*

**Department of
Career & Technology Education**
*R.L. Beaty
Chief of Staff
Retired*
*Ann Benson
State Director
Retired*
*Pete J. Buswell
State Director*

Department of Commerce
*A.J. Hudson
Human Resource Executive Secretary
Retired*

Employment Security Commission
*Vicki Kelso
Human Resources Programs Manager*

Office of the Governor
*Nelda Kirk
Deputy Chief of Staff—Administration*

Department of Human Services
*Mikki Gutierrez
Human Resource Management Specialist
Resigned*

Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services

*Sonja Harkey
Human Resource Assistant*

Office of Personnel Management

*Veronica Bronn
Administrative Programs Officer
Office of Communications
Separated by reduction-in-force*
*Ann Craven
Administrative Assistant
Office of Communications*

*Christa Dorsey
Human Resource Management Specialist
Management Services
Separated by reduction-in-force*

*Cyndy Kyle
Administrative Technician
Management Services*

*Gabe Marler
Information Systems Application Specialist
Information Technology Services
Separated by reduction-in-force*

*Kimberly Miller
Carl Albert Executive Fellow
Employee Selection Services
Resigned to accept a position in office of
Governor Brad Henry*

*Marianne Sanchez
Administrative Assistant
Management Services*

*Kim Wojcak
Payroll Administrative Assistant
Management Services*

Department of Rehabilitation Services

*Christina Kersbner
Human Resource Management Specialist
Retired*

*Eddie Rodriguez
Human Resource Administrator
Resigned*

Secretary of State
*Dawn Amundsen
Deputy Secretary of State
Resigned*

Office of the State Treasurer
*Nelda Kirk
Personnel Director
Resigned to accept a position in office of
Governor Brad Henry*

Executive Orders Since December 2002

2003-04 (2/27/03)
Governor's Cabinet

2002-17 c-c (12/31/02)
Hiring Freeze (corrected copy)

CPP Designations Since October 2002

Russell Allen
District Attorneys Council

Janet Anderson
Office of Personnel Management

Judy Boren
Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry

Jan Campbell
State Department of Health

Caroline Dennis
Oklahoma State Senate

Janet Ewing
Board of Medical Licensure & Supervision

Nancy Harbuck
Department of Veterans Affairs

Sheri Landes
Office of Juvenile Affairs

Amani Long
State Department of Health

Megan Moody
Department of Career & Technology Education

Michele Morris
Office of Personnel Management

Elvia Murrell
State Department of Health

Donna Payne
Office of the State Auditor & Inspector

Anne Simons
Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation

Note: The CPP (Certified Personnel Professionals) designation is awarded to state employees assigned to professional HR positions in the executive branch of state government who attend a four-day training session, successfully complete an examination, and attend a minimum of eight hours of training in professional HR administration each year.

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On January 21, 2003, Governor Brad Henry named Oscar B. Jackson, Jr. Administrator of the Office of Personnel Management and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration.

In June 1991, Governor David Walters named Jackson Administrator of the Office of Personnel Management and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources. In January 1995, Governor Frank Keating reappointed him to both positions.

SoonerSave participants at certain income levels may be eligible for a new federal income tax credit. Log onto the SoonerSave Website at www.soonersave.com for information.

OPM Releases FY 02 EEO/AA Status Report

Brenda Thornton, OPM

In compliance with Section 840-2.1 of the Oklahoma Personnel Act, OPM has released the *Oklahoma State Government Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Status Report*, which covers the reporting period from July 1, 2001, through June 30, 2002. You may access the report on the OPM Website (www.opm.state.ok.us) under *Did You Know?/OPM Releases FY 02 EEO/AA Status Report*.

Highlights from the report indicate that:

- The state of Oklahoma's workforce consisted of 34,475 employees in the 108 reporting agencies, boards, and commissions, an increase of 179 state employees (0.5 percent) from the 34,296 reported as of June 30, 2001.
- There was an increase of 150 minority employees (2.3 percent) from 6,651 in FY 01 to 6,801 in FY 02.
- There was an increase in female representation of 135 employees (0.7 percent) from 18,814 in FY 01 to 18,949 in FY 02.
- Through affirmative action, equal opportunity, and targeted minority recruitment efforts, state government made proportionately greater progress in the employment of ethnic minorities and females during FY 02.

The continued affirmative action goal of Oklahoma state government is to achieve a workforce that is truly representative of every racial, ethnic, and gender group in Oklahoma. This report reflects progress toward that goal.

If you have questions or desire additional information, contact Brenda C. Thornton, OPM Director of Equal Opportunity and Workforce Diversity, at (405) 521-3082, or brenda.thornton@opm.state.ok.us.

OPHRA Hosts Spring Training Seminar

The Oklahoma Public Human Resources Association (formerly the Oklahoma Public Personnel Association) has scheduled its spring training seminar for Thursday, April 3, 2003, at the University of Central Oklahoma. The fee for the seminar is \$45.00 and the registration deadline is March 31.

Topics and speakers include *The Current Budget Crisis in Oklahoma*, Scott Meacham, Director of the Office of State Finance; *The Crucible: Reduction in Force and Organizational Change*, Cynthia Clegg, Senior HR Director for Oklahoma City Public Schools; *Fair Labor Standards Act Update*, Nick DeQuiroga, U.S. Department of Labor, Little Rock, AR; *Legislative Update*, Dayna R. Petete, OPM Assistant Administrator for Communications and Legislative Liaison; *Anatomy of a Retirement System*, Steve Edmonds, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Public Employees Retirement System; *50 Ways to Cut Your Budget*, Nancy Barrett, Assistant Manager, Training Division, Oklahoma Department of Transportation; and *Managing Negotiations In Harsh Economic Times* (panel discussion).

Registration begins at 8:00 am and the seminar is scheduled to end at 4:15 pm. Contact Diane Haser-Bennett, OPHRA president, at (405) 521-2169, or diane.haserbennett@opm.state.ok.us for more information.

OPHRA is the Oklahoma Chapter of the International Public Management Association for Human Resources and the National Public Employers Labor Relations Association. Its membership is comprised of individuals from state, county, and municipal government, as well as employment law experts from some of the leading employment law firms and management consultants in Oklahoma. OPHRA offers its members a unique opportunity to share information and resources, gain technical training and expertise inside the state, and have access to information regarding both state and national legal issues and trends related to Human Resources and Labor Relations management.

Federal Government Recommends Using Structured Interviews

IPMA-HR Bulletin—March 7, 2003

Agencies are advised to use structured interviews to assess candidates for federal jobs, according to a new report released by the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB). The report, *The Federal Selection Interview: Unrealized Potential*, states that structured interviews are twice as effective as unstructured interviews in predicting on-the-job performance.

In a structured interview, all questions are related to the job to be filled, and the same questions are asked of each candidate for the job. There is a pre-determined system for evaluating interview responses, and interviewers are trained in conducting and evaluating structured interviews. In contrast, an unstructured interview is informal, and questions are not necessarily job-related. The questions may vary for different candidates, there is no objective evaluation system, and interviewers may be untrained.

According to an earlier MSPB survey, 95 percent of federal supervisors say they rely on an interview to a “great” or “moderate” extent when making a selection. The new report concludes that, because selection interviews are widely used and influential, it is important that they be used effectively.

The report recommends that agencies decide in advance what purpose an interview is to serve and then design and conduct the interview accordingly. If the purpose is to use the interview as a recruitment tool, for example, an unstructured interview will suffice. A structured interview will be more effective, however, if the purpose is to screen or rank candidates, or make a final selection. The report also recommends that agencies invest the resources needed to add structure to their selection interviews and that they evaluate their interview practices for effectiveness and possible improvement.

Order copies of the report from the Merit Systems Protection Board, Office of Policy and Evaluation, 1615 M Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20419; phone: (202) 653-6772, extension 1350; V/TDD (800) 877-8339. The report may also be downloaded from the “Studies” area on the Board’s website (www.mspb.gov).

Editor’s Note: In May 2001, OPM pub-

lished a structured interview manual for state agencies entitled, “Developing and Administering Structured Interviews”. This manual, developed by OPM’s Personnel Assessment Division, provides both a comprehensive collection of the underlying theories supporting structured interviews and detailed instructions on creating and implementing them. The manual includes a review of current professional literature as well as suggestions from HR professionals throughout Oklahoma state government.

For many years, OPM’s Personnel Assessment Division has provided on-site assistance to state agencies in developing and implementing structured interviews. These agencies have reported that they are very pleased with the results and have felt a higher level of confidence with their hiring decisions.

As one of the most widely-used selection procedures, oral interviewing should be conducted in a manner that is both reliable and valid, as well as legally defensible. The manual emphasizes that when properly used, the structured interview will ensure a fair and effective alternative to traditional unstructured interviewing. The manual is available on OPM’s Website (www.opm.state.ok.us) under Quick Links.

F.Y.I.

According to OPM’s 2002 Pay Movement Mechanism Report, the number and cost of pay movement mechanism (PMM) transactions decreased from CY 01 to CY 02. Transactions decreased from 5,616 in 2001 to 3,774 in 2002, while total costs declined from \$6,261,687.66 to \$3,799,330.53. The projected cost for PMM usage for the remainder of FY 2003 is \$1,577,931.27. The total number of personnel transactions for PMMs declined 32.80% from CY 01 to CY 02. The total cost of PMMs decreased 39.32% from the previous calendar year. You may access the 2002 PMM Report on the OPM Website (www.opm.state.ok.us) under Did You Know?|OPM Releases 2002 Pay Movement Mechanism Usage Report.

Budget Crisis Got You Down? What You Need is a Little PEP!

Through the Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP), the state presents cash and non-cash awards to state employees for ideas, programs, and projects which result in increased productivity, cost savings, revenue generation, or improved safety, efficiency, morale, or better services. PEP is designed to reward initiatives that exceed the normal expectations of an individual’s regular job responsibilities, such as new systems, procedures, etc.

Non-cash awards are certificates and lapel pins given for implemented ideas that result in improved services, efficiency, morale, or safety. Cash awards up to \$10,000 are given for implemented ideas that save the state money; cash awards must equal at least 25 percent of the actual savings but not exceed the actual savings. Unit incentive awards are cash awards given to divisions, work teams, or entire agencies that reduce their cost of operations without decreasing their level of services.

Before an individual or group may receive a PEP award, (1) the individual or group must be nominated on official PEP forms by a supervisor, (2) the state agency must evaluate the nomination and forward it to the PEP committee, and (3) the idea must be implemented.

PEP is administered by a seven-member Incentive Awards for State Employees Committee. The chair of the Committee is Pam Warren, Director, Department of Central Services, and the vice-chair is Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., Administrator, Office of Personnel Management and Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources and Administration. The PEP committee makes the decision regarding eligibility and how much cash will be awarded (agency directors recommend specific award amounts). Cost savings must be verified by the Office of State Finance.

Cash awards to date total \$238,097 for a first year savings total of \$7,474,719. Twenty-seven agencies and 278 state employees have participated in PEP.

For more information, contact Natasha Riley, OPM Personnel Assessment Division, at (405) 521-6361.