

**June 2013**

Disaster Newsletter

Your quarterly update from the Office of Disaster Assistance

**From the Deputy Associate Administrator**

This month marks the start of the six month long hurricane season. With the devastation of Superstorm Sandy still fresh in our minds, the devastating Oklahoma tornadoes and another active hurricane season predicted by NOAA already upon us, it is important to leverage the lessons learned this past year to help achieve ODA's mission in the future. Next week, ODA's senior managers will meet at the Processing and Disbursement Center for a series of meetings that will focus on improving service to disaster victims, including Sandy After Action Reports and Process Improvements.

Our attention also continues to be focused on responding to active disaster declarations; from our initial contact with disaster victims to issuing the final disbursement of disaster loan funds, our mission is not complete until we have done all that we can for the homeowners, renters and businesses affected by our nation's most devastating disasters. ODA's commitment to excellence in public service was recognized last month when it received two SBA Ike Awards: ODA won an Administrator's Award for a Program Office; and FOC-W Director Al Judd won an SBA Way MVP Award. Just two examples of the fine work being done all across ODA. I hope to see more of our team members recognized at next year's SBA Ike Awards.

This issue of the ODA Newsletter will inform you about some of the current activities going on around the Agency, celebrate staff accomplishments — both inside and outside the workplace — and introduce you to some important new faces. I would also like to remind all of our permanent and cadre employees that the 2013 Employee Viewpoint Survey is open until June 14th. Last year, ODA had an overall response rate of 88%, which is substantially higher than the Agency response rate of 65% and the government-wide rate of 46%. I strongly encourage all eligible employees to participate in the EVS before the deadline. The feedback and results collected from the EVS are used to improve work life, performance management, training programs and other areas across SBA and ODA that employees identify as needing improvement.

Let your voice be heard and in the few minutes it takes to complete the survey you can affect positive change at SBA.

All the best,

Joe Loddo

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We want to hear from you!

Do you have recommendations for what you'd like to see in this newsletter? Send your comments or suggestions to your Center contributor or to [alejandro.contreras@sba.gov](mailto:alejandro.contreras@sba.gov)

Read and Conserve

Please read this newsletter electronically to save paper. If you do print, consider sharing with your team!

## **DISASTER ACTIVITY SNAPSHOT**

As of June 7th, ODA was working 2 open Presidential IA and 9 open Presidential PA disasters. ODA is actively working 8 Administrative declarations, 6 Governor certifications, 118 Sec Ag and 1 nationwide MREIDL declaration for a total of 144 open/active disasters.

## **Hurricane Sandy: FOC-West Responds**

Think about SBA's Field Operations Centers, and you imagine surge staff working away from home at disaster sites. True to form, in the midst of SBA's 2012 Hurricane Sandy response, FOC-West (FOC-W) deployed about 150 Customer Service Representatives (CSRs), Public Information Officers (PIOs) and IT specialists to support FOC-East's efforts. We also provided significant additional help from FOC-W for loan processing.

As the volume of loan applications skyrocketed, FOC-W was asked to do more than support the field effort. A backlog of more than 3,700 disaster victims' emails in the Electronic Loan Application mailbox had developed that needed to be read and answered quickly. FOC-W staff assumed responsibility for all incoming messages to the ELA mailbox (the ELA special project) to obtain missing filing requirement information for ELA applications received, thus eliminating

a potential loan processing choke point. So far, FOC-W has responded to nearly 18,500 ELA emails.

In addition to the ELA mailbox, thousands of home and business applications needed insurance information verified. Starting the week before Christmas, FOC-W staff was tasked with researching loan applicant insurance coverage (the insurance special project). This team delivered another enormous processing shortcut to the loan officers, greatly expediting file turnaround and accelerating help to those in need. FOC-W completed 54,483 insurance policy verifications for 23,446 case files in just 4 months.

FOC-W sent 11 Loss Verifiers to the Damage Verification Center (DVC) to conduct on-site inspections in NY and NJ. In addition to field support, later on two FOC-W cadre LVs were asked to help review files from FOC-W for the DVC. This extra help allowed the DVC to put more resources on the street, which expedited verifications and helped speed up processing time. By the end of their project, FOC-W LVs completed nearly 2,400 DVC reviews.

Finally, in accordance with ODA's surge plan, to augment the PDC's efforts a loan processing group was established in Sacramento. FOC-W hired 226 processing LOs, over 1/3 of the total LOs processing Sandy files. FOC-W also hired new support staff to provide IT, administrative, HR, faxing and other services to keep the new LOs as productive as possible.

Every FOC-W department contributed staff members to work on these unique Hurricane Sandy support projects: Administrative Services, Field Operations, IT, Loss Verification, Management, Mail Room, Personnel and Public Information each offered significant contributions, the true embodiment of the "One SBA" concept.

### **Herndon Build-Out Project**

Progress is steady at the Herndon Operations Center's Modernization Project. While squeezing two floors and five Centers onto one floor all in one week was a challenge, through lots of hard work and much appreciated cooperation of our staffs, we were able to achieve this with minimal disruption of our everyday workflow.

At present, the sixth floor is completely void of contents. The movers completed the task of relocating all the furnishings and our systems furniture workers dismantled the entire cubicle spaces on the floor. This bare shell is ready for painting, complexly refurbishing, and being fitted with a more modern and ergonomic space design, as well as improved systems furniture.

Mr. Loddo and Mr. Rivera expressed their excitement for the opportunity to provide our staffs at the Herndon Operations Center with an environment that is beneficial to both comfort and productivity.

### **Staying Safe and Avoiding Injury at Work**

Please follow all safety precautions when performing your duties. Each employee has a role in making sure the workplace is safe. If you see an unsafe working condition or practice, please report it to your supervisor immediately.

The Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) provides federal employees injured in the performance of duty with workers' compensation benefits, which include wage-loss benefits for total or partial disability, monetary benefits for permanent loss of use of a schedule member, medical benefits, and vocational rehabilitation. This Act also provides survivor benefits to eligible dependents if the injury causes the employee's death. The FECA is administered by the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP).

If you sustain an on-the-job injury while working, report the incident immediately to your supervisor. Even if the injury does not require medical treatment, you will be asked to complete an injury report form, a CA-1.

Supervisors may obtain the CA-1 from the Human Resources Office. If the injury requires immediate attention, the Human Resources office will also provide you with a Form CA-16, "Authorization for Examination and/or Treatment." This form will authorize the physician or facility of your choice to bill the government direct.

However, if misconduct or disregard for safety causes the incident, medical bills will be the responsibility of the individual. For more information, go to the U.S. Department of Labor's page on FECA by clicking [here](#).

### **Helpful Reminder from ODP about Vacancy Announcements**

Make sure you carefully read and follow the instructions on the vacancy announcements to which you apply. Certain documentation must be submitted on, or in addition to, the resume/application by the closing date of the announcement or employees will not receive consideration for the vacancy. Please contact your center HR department or the Point of Contact listed on the vacancy announcement.

### **Other News**

#### **ODA Health & Wellness**

The Office of Disaster Strategic Engagement & Effectiveness (ODSEE) continues to make efforts to improve the work, life and health of all ODA employees.

In April, they rolled out the first in a series of monthly health challenges. These challenges, as well as other work-life and wellness initiatives will be ongoing. For the kickoff, ODSEE offered prizes for all participants that sent in a completed fitness calendar and indicated that they completed all the specified challenges. In addition, they had special prizes for the first ten employees who completed the challenge and sent in the completed calendar.

ODSEE is also conducting a series of wellness webinars. The first webinar provided information on Food Safety, which was conducted by Diane Monaco of the Food & Drug Administration (FDA). Their next webinar on Food Labeling will take place on June 20th. ODSEE would like to thank everyone that has participated in the monthly fitness challenges and wellness webinars and hope it was fun and made a difference. We encourage everyone to participate in future work-life and wellness events as we roll them out. For more information, please contact ODSEE team members Kenisha Barnes, Marcie Crawford or Felicia Izevbogie.

## **SBA Hosts Daughters and Sons**

Several offices across ODA participated in the annual – Take Our Daughters & Sons to Work Day. In Headquarters, the children participated in a Lemonade Stand Competition, complete with a lemonade sell-off. The children worked extremely hard to setup, market, and operate their lemonade stands and the event was a great success. In FOC-W, children visited various departments where they were able to experience some of the processes that department is responsible for. In the IT department, they dissected a laptop and rebuilt the same system, while learning each of the parts and their functions. The CSC TODSTW day committee did a wonderful job of scheduling activities throughout the day that started with an overview of their day-to-day operations. Next, the children were provided a tour of the facility and had a chance to meet some of their parent’s coworkers and the new Deputy Center Director, Jeff Zinn. Some of the other activities included a high-tech computer-based scavenger hunt, listening to recorded telephone calls and SBA Jeopardy. When the children were asked about their day, the responses ranged from – “we had a great day” to them being surprised that the CSC had a system to keep the noise levels down. In addition, the children participated in the CSC’s Multicultural Food Day. This was held in celebration of employee’s various cultures and ethnic backgrounds. Personnel brought food items that were representative of their culture, nationality, or just a family favorite. Children and staff alike sampled a wide variety of delicious foods, making the day a truly memorable experience with lots of laughs and smiles for everyone. The PDC plans to hold their own TODSTW Day during the month of June. We cannot wait to hear about their event!

## **Employee Spotlight**

### **Welcome Jeffery Zinn, CSC Deputy Director**

Jeff began his public service career in 1996 as a Claims Examiner with the Department of Veterans Affairs in his hometown of Saint Louis, MO. During his tenure in the Saint Louis Regional Office, he began work on an imaging system that ultimately replaced paper files at all of the VA Education Regional Processing Offices. Jeff transitioned to a Compliance Survey Specialist where he visited training institutions to verify their records and provided technical assistance. Living in the Saint Louis area also gave Jeff an awareness of the plight some face when impacted by a natural disaster. During the mid-1990’s, the Mississippi River flooded many areas repeatedly, including areas in the City and suburbs of Saint Louis.

In 2002, Jeff took a position as a Program Analyst on a project development team in Washington, DC. He helped develop a web application that enabled training institutions to submit documentation electronically to the VA, instead of using paper forms. In 2006, Jeff shuffled off to Buffalo, NY in his new position as the Education Officer for the Buffalo Veteran’s Affairs Regional Office that handles claims for the northeast and overseas. That fall, Jeff experienced the “October Storm” in Western New York that became a Presidential declaration. That event, and his broad history of helping those in need, put the SBA’s Office of Disaster Assistance on his radar. So when the position of Deputy Center Director in the Customer Service Center became available, Jeff felt like he had found his niche.

“Jeff brings a broad range of experience serving as a Claims Examiner, Education Liaison Representative, Cert Coordinator, Management and Program Analyst and Education Officer,” states CSC Director Coleen Hiam.

Outside of work, Jeff is a St. Louis Cardinals fan, an automobile enthusiast, and enjoys seeing this great country by taking roads less traveled.

### **Welcome Beau Benedict, ASC Deputy Director**

ASC wishes a warm welcome to Beau Benedict as its new Deputy Director. Beau assumed his duties in late February and is quickly adapting to the “SBA Way.” He comes to SBA from Booz Allen Hamilton where he served as a management consultant specializing in analytics and marketing. He is also an eight-year veteran of the Marine Corps. He cites his exposure to diverse cultures and variety of people as one of his one of his best life lessons gleaned from military life. Beau received his Bachelor’s degree at the University of Florida and is presently completing his Masters at George Mason University.

Beau spent his formative years in Louisiana, considering himself a “lifetime citizen “of the Bayou State. He is both a Florida Gator & diehard Redskins fan. While both studying and working at Disaster Assistance, he and his wife Quinn enjoy their other full time job...2 and 4 year old daughters. If he gets a spare moment, Beau says that he always loves a good camping trip as it connects him with nature; his true passion.

### **Welcome Jennifer Arnold, DCMS Deputy Director**

The DCMS Operation Center in Herndon welcomes Ms. Jennifer L. Arnold as its new Deputy Director. Jennifer comes to the Office of Disaster Assistance from the Department of the Interior’s Financial and Business Management System. Additionally, she has over 15 years of Federal service.

Jennifer is a native Marylander, and is proud to be a DC area native; she believes her mighty Capitals will rebound to their former playoff glory. If not, she has a few words for the Caps organization. Her top priority is her two children—three, if you include the adorable four-legged Zoey. Her family serves as both her avocation and her hobby. She loves to travel with them and considers traveling one of the best forms of education for both herself and her family.

### **Congratulations to Shaniek Green!**

FOC-E congratulates Shaniek Green, Program Support Assistant with the Communications Department, on receiving her MBA from Mercer University!

Shaniek, who started with SBA in August 2010, received her undergraduate degree in Human Resources Management from Mercer University in December 2011. She decided to further her education by enrolling in the accelerated MBA program at Mercer. A wife and mother of two, Shaniek knew it would be a challenge balancing home, work and school, but she wanted to show her children the rewards of hard work and dedication. For the past 16 months, Shaniek spent every other weekend in class, and participated in frequent group meetings and conference calls for many projects. On May 11, Shaniek was greeted by her husband and children proudly as she

walked across the stage after receiving her degree. Even an MBA is not enough; Shaniek has already enrolled in a Project Management Certification Course that began May 20.

### **2013 Length of Service Milestones**

In 2013, these employees reached 25+ years of service milestones.

Christopher Rudek (DCMS) 25 Years

Kenneth Williams (PDC) 25 Years

Michael Jahnke (CSC) 25 Years

John Lopez (FOC-E) 25 Years

Brenda Ballew (FOC-E) 30 Years

Delpha Martinez (PDC) 30 Years

### **Noteworthy Achievements**

If you would like to recognize an ODA employee for their noteworthy achievements, exemplary service, or other outstanding news, please contact Alex at [Alejandro.Contreras@sba.gov](mailto:Alejandro.Contreras@sba.gov) or Kenisha at [Kenisha.Barnes@sba.gov](mailto:Kenisha.Barnes@sba.gov).