



DIVERSITY@WORK

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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY ON VA'S GREATEST CHALLENGE IN MAINTAINING WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

The Honorable Deputy Secretary Gordon H. Mansfield shares his thoughts on the challenges VA faces in maintaining workforce diversity.

One of the areas of greatest concern to me about VA, and the Federal Government in general, is strategic management of human resources. We must recruit, develop, and retain the best people we possibly can. VA is on the cusp of a wave of retirements. A generation of employees is poised to retire. To add to our challenge, we face a shifting and expanding mission...a tight labor market...and the potential for gaps in labor skills. Taken together, these factors could point to workforce disruptions. Some say these factors have the making of a VA, if not Government-wide, human resource crisis.

It is up to you and me to ensure that 21st century VA reflects the face of 21st century America. VA is committed to pursuing any and all outreach efforts...partnerships...and alliances that could build a workforce reflecting America itself. As retirements take their toll, we do not want to compromise the diversity of our current employee population. We do want to advance its diversity.

CELEBRATE!

Grand Opening of NMAI in Washington, DC

Besides the special observances VA recognizes annually during September and October—Patriot Day (September 11), HBCU Week (September 12-18), National POW/MIA Recognition Day (September 14), Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15-October 15), National Disability Employment Awareness Month (October), and National Disability Employment Mentoring Day (October 20)—there is cause for more celebration this year. Tuesday, September 21,



This next decade easily promises to be our best chance ever to improve our representational standing. We need to make the most of it!

It is in our best interest to make smart hiring decisions that are inclusive. It is essential that we use mentoring programs that develop the talent we already have. It is important that we strengthen our partnership with OPM. We must leverage our collaborations with professional associations so we can broaden our ability to recruit and retain highly skilled and qualified women, minority, and disabled employees. We must rededicate ourselves to equal opportunity if we are to have a workforce that reflects the veterans and the communities we serve. Opportunity is a cornerstone principle of this great Nation. As President Franklin Roosevelt once said: "We know that equality of individual ability has never existed and never will, but we do insist that equality of opportunity be sought."■

marks the grand opening of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington, DC. NMAI is an institution of living cultures dedicated to the preservation, study, and exhibition of life, languages, literature, history, and arts of the Native Peoples from the four directions of the Western Hemisphere. For more information, visit www.americanindian.si.edu. Other observance resources can be found on the DM&EEO Web site.■

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BOOKMARKS

- ▶ **American Indian Disability Technical Assistance Center**
<http://aidtac.ruralinstitute.umd.edu>
- ▶ **Hispanics in Information Technology & Telecommunications**
www.hittglobal.org
- ▶ **Minority Corporate Council Association**
<http://mcca.com>
- ▶ **Minority Law Journal, Directory of Minority Attorneys**
www.minoritylawjournal.com/directory04
- ▶ **National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice**
www.nabcj.org
- ▶ **National Organization of Pacific Islanders in America**
www.nopia.us



FIELD NOTES

News You Can Use

Spotlight on Employees

To join *NewsLink*, our free, weekly electronic news service, send an e-mail to dmeeo@mail.va.gov with SUBSCRIBE NEWS in the subject line. Thanks to our *NewsLink* content partners:

- Asian Diversity Magazine
- Black MBA Magazine
- Business & Legal Reports
- DiversityCareers.com
- Federal Employees News
- FedNews Online
- FindLaw
- Government Executive
- Government Procurement
- HireDiversity.com
- Hispanic Business
- HR Executive Magazine
- Indian Country Today
- Journal of Issues in Nursing
- Linkage, Inc.
- National Org. on Disability
- Newsweek
- National Public Radio
- Pew Hispanic Center
- SHRM
- The Access Board
- Training Media Review
- USAToday.com
- Washingtonpost.com
- Workforce Magazine
- Workindex.com

VA Employee Wins the National Hispanic Heritage Month Theme Contest

Hispanic Heritage Month is observed annually from September 15 to October 15. This year's theme will be "Hispanic Americans: Making a Difference in Our Community and Our Nation." Ms. Victoria Reynolds, Veterans Service Representative, VA Regional Office, Albuquerque, New Mexico, won the National Hispanic Heritage Month theme contest for her entry. The contest began March 1, and was facilitated by the National Council of Hispanic Employment Program Managers. A total of 121 theme entries were received from across the country, overseas, and over 200 people participated in the preliminary and final vote. Ms. Reynolds is a member of the Presidential Management Fellows Masters Program and she anticipates graduating December 2005. Congratulations to Ms. Reynolds.

Farewell to Noemi Pizarro-Hyman and Donna Abernathy

Lead EEO Program Manager for DM&EEO, Noemi Pizarro-Hyman, served as National Program Manager for People with Disabilities, Hispanic Employment, and Native American Programs for DM&EEO since April 2001. Ms. Pizarro-Hyman is a U.S. Army veteran, serving from August

1980 to April 1989. Donna Abernathy joined VA in 2001 as DM&EEO's Chief Editor/Writer. As the Communications and Awareness Director, she managed communication and publication projects for the Office, including its newsletter, Web site, *Diversity News* broadcast, information guides and booklets, and media partnerships.

Ms. Pizarro-Hyman and Ms. Abernathy recently transferred to the Defense Intelligence Agency. Their contributions to DM&EEO have been valuable to VA's mission and they will be missed.

New Faces at DM&EEO

Angela Burris is a Presidential Management Fellow and a certified rehabilitation counselor. She serves as National Program Manager for People with Disabilities and Native Americans.

Yvonne Gabonia is a graduate student pursuing a M.A. in English. She serves as a publishing assistant and editor of *Diversity@Work*.

Peter Yoon is a Presidential Management Fellow and serves as a Workforce Data Analyst and National Program Manager for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Welcome new DM&EEO employees!■



For special observance theme information, visit our Web site and select the Calendar link.

WEB SITE SPOTLIGHT

OPM VetGuide

www.opm.gov/employ/html/vetguide.htm

Content: The Office of Personnel Management's VetGuide explains the special rights and privileges that veterans enjoy in Federal civil service employment. The guide conveniently summarizes in one place material from many laws and regulations that affect the employment of veterans and will help Federal personnel specialists ensure that veterans receive the advantages they have earned.

Must-see features: This document is both easily accessible and readable. The contents are conveniently listed in an outline format.

Contact info: OPM, 1900 E Street NW, Washington, DC 20415-1000, (202) 606-1800

Accessibility: This Web site is compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998.■

SPECIAL EMPHASIS

Executive Order 13339

The following includes excerpts from the Executive Order 13339 Fact Sheet.

Executive Order 13339, renewing a previous Executive Order which established the President's Advisory Commission and a Federal Interagency Working Group on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, was signed on May 13, 2004, to increase economic opportunities for and improve the quality of life of approximately 14 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders living in the United States and the U.S.-associated Pacific Island jurisdictions.

The Commission consists of fourteen individuals with a history of involvement and leadership in Asian American and Pacific Islander communities from fields such as health, economic and community development, and business. VA, along with other departments and agencies, provides information to the Commission so that it may carry out its

duties to develop strategies and joint public-private efforts to improve Asian American and Pacific Islander participation in Government programs; foster research and data collection for Asian American and Pacific Islander businesses and communities; and increase their level of participation in the national economy and their economic and community development.

The Executive Order also establishes a Federal Interagency Working Group, which calls on all Federal agencies to mobilize their resources to address the unmet needs of Asian American and Pacific Islander businesses and communities. The Office of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders coordinates the activities of both the President's Advisory Commission and the Interagency Working Group. Executive Order 13339, a detailed fact sheet, and other documents can be accessed at www.aapi.gov. ■

INSIDE STORY

VA Participates in First Public Meeting of AAPI Advisory Commission

Fourteen Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders were appointed to the President's Advisory Commission renewed by Executive Order 13339. The Commissioners are Chairperson Betty Wu, William P. Afeaki, Nina Nguyen Collier, Akshay Desai, Vellie Dietrich-Hall, William Kil, John C. Kim, Jimmy Lee, Joseph Melookaran, Derrick Nguyen, Rudy Pamintuan, Martha Cruz Ruth, Jeffrey B. Sakaguchi, and Kenneth Wong.

On July 20, 2004, these fourteen members traveled to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where they held their first public meeting at The Enterprise Center. The Commissioners listened to the testimonies of individuals representing a number of organizations.

David Chung, Program Analyst for the Center for Minority Veterans (CMV), was one of two VA representatives to offer Federal information presentations to the Commission. He informed the Commissioners about CMV's mission and the role of CMV Minority Veterans Program Coordinators. Outreach into AAPI communities should include veterans because of the part they play in the economic structure—many have started small busi-

nesses with help from VA benefits and VA Small Business Loans, Mr. Chung explained. He went on to describe CMV's Veteran Business and Economic Development Outreach, to discuss the role of the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans, and concluded with a successful example of how traditional customs can be made as part of an economic structure through the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

Richard Ramirez, Senior Business Advisor with the Center for Veterans Enterprise (CVE), also addressed the Commission. He provided a general overview of CVE, which promotes small business development for veterans, supports economic empowerment for every veteran entrepreneur, and provides resource assistance for veterans and service-disabled veterans considering business ownership. His remarks concerning the new Federal initiative and law that recognizes Service-Disabled, Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) as a priority for Federal contracting consideration were received with great interest and enthusiasm. For more information on CVE, visit www.vetbiz.gov. ■

Diversity@Work

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www.va.gov/dmeeo

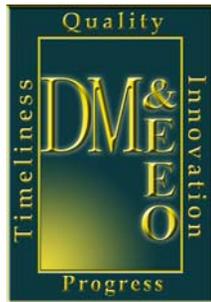
OTHER USEFUL LINKS

Department of Veterans Affairs
www.va.gov

VA Office of Resolution Management
www.va.gov/orm

VA Office of Human Resources Management and Labor Relations
www.va.gov/ohrm

DM&EEO ONLINE



The mission of the Office of DM&EEO is to provide leadership in creating and sustaining a diverse workplace free of discrimination at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Here's a sampling of online tools that can help you promote the employment of veterans, women, minorities, and people with disabilities:

- ▶ National Hispanic Heritage Month Resources
- ▶ Disability Employment Mentoring Day Resources
- ▶ Professional and Community Organization Links

Bookmark our site; we're here to serve you!

2004 DIVERSITY CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

Patriot Day
September 11

Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week
September 12-18

National POW/MIA Recognition Day
September 14

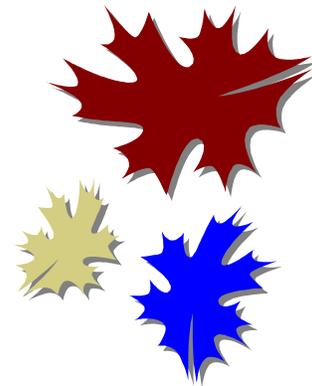
National Hispanic Heritage Month
September 15-October 15

Constitution Day
September 17

OCTOBER
National Disability Employment Awareness Month
October

Disability Employment Mentoring Day
October 20

SHRM Workplace Diversity Conference & Exposition
Chicago, IL
October 25-27
www.shrm.org/conferences/diversity



Coming soon:

NOVEMBER
National American Indian Heritage Month
November

Veterans Day
November 11

CAREERS & the disABLED Magazine's Career Expo for People with Disabilities
Washington, DC
November 12
www.eop.com/cdexponydc.html

For more events, visit www.va.gov/dmeeo and select the Calendar link.