

Sunburst:

A Horizon Newsletter

2009 Trainee Forum Edition

Trainees from across the Great Lakes Region descended on the Windy City for the 2009 PBS Trainee Forum. The three-day event was packed with informative panels, employee recognition, and plenty of fun. For full coverage, see Pages 2-3.

Congratulations to 2009's PBS Trainee Program Graduates!

Sarah Andrae	Romina Jimenez-Noeckel
Elisabeth Bordelon	Lacie Kaiser
Krystal Blue	David Lamb
Edmee Castro	Malcolm Lewis
Justin Costello	Marco Lopez
Pamela Davis	Cecelia McCoppin
Bridget Egan	Thomas Nisivaco
Leslie Gonzalez	Ryan Raschke
Joslann Gray	Brian Weiss
Abdulrahman Habeeb	Brandon Whittier
Harpreet Heer	Shekita Wimberly
Jamakia Harris	Vanessa Zahora



Above: A full house for one of the Trainee Forum's many informative training seminars.

Below: PBS directors such as Jerry Gucfa (far left) share their insights and experience with future leaders.



Coordinator's Corner

Dress for success (Part 2 of 4 on Professionalism)

Do you have on a tie?
At a recent teleconference panel, to everyone's surprise, that was the first question asked! Even though GSA does not have an official dress code, the rule of thumb seems to be "come to work dressed better than your manager."

I am sure you have

all heard the saying "dress for success" – implying that you should arrive to work everyday dressed like you are receiving a promotion. While I am not suggesting you wear a suit and tie or stockings and high-heeled shoes everyday, you should not get comfortable with the idea

that no one pays attention. In fact, it is quite the opposite – EVERYONE pays attention.

The next time you put your tie back on the hanger or reach for your comfy flip flops, think twice about the message you want to send.

-Teneshia Miller

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Horizon's Newest Members:

Chicago, IL

Giovanni Diaz
Joshua Westhouse
Nathan Ingersoll
Rhonda Hill
William Winczner
Gregory Tiffany
Elizabeth Madison
Breean Hayes
Bret Culen
Naveed Nabavi
Russell Swickheimer
Katie Brazeau
Matthew Swanson
Cary Kubiak
Gia Roberts
Latrese Williams
Julia Hagenmeyer
Anthony Silverman
Aaron Schlott
Brian Orr
Lindsey Fahey
Arisa Soper

Ohio Service Center

Joseph Blake
Daniel Essenmacher
David Zeeb
Sarah Zemanek
Bethany Moore

Michigan Service Center

Daniel Nitu
Ronald Smith
Jerrud Parker
Pamela Brown
Thomas Beard

Minnesota / Wisconsin Service Center

Rosemarie Buchalski

PBS Trainee

At right: Bruce Wagner congratulates Douglas Gerlemann on his Outstanding Trainee Recognition



At the end of August, Region 5 trainees spent some time in Chicago for the 2009 PBS Trainee Forum. For three days, trainees met in the Ralph H. Metcalfe Federal Building for panel sessions, team-building exercises, and networking opportunities.

Panel sessions covered a variety of topics and were presented by trainees, supervisors, and directors. To name a few: trainee Irene Stamatakis discussed architectural licensing through GSA; Christine McKenna, Client Delivery Team Manager, gave an overview of Census 2010; and Robert Nawrocki, PBS' Chief of Staff, presented a session about the national consistency effort.



Above: Kristina Wallig and Kimberly Skaff are recognized by John Siegel.

Below: Ron Snow and Pat McCarthy receive honors from Don Whitacre.



Nancy Smith, PBS Training Coordinator, offered team building activities that involved taking a project from design through construction, and finally to completion and cost analysis. At the same time, Clay Wilson and Paul Tsagaroulis offered engagement sessions focused on compiling feedback, thoughts, and suggestions for the Trainee Program.

Throughout the Forum, trainees were able to hear presentations from division directors. This provided an excellent opportunity to learn about the directors' responsibilities, along with each division's role within GSA. Also, trainees were able to meet and network with directors during roundtable discussions offered on the second day of the Forum.

On the second day, directors, mentors, coaches, and trainees gathered for the Annual Trainee Award Ceremony. John Siegel, Customer Projects Service Center's Deputy Director, emceed the event and delivered a speech about what drew him to government and his passion for service. Each division and service center nominated a trainee or two who deserved "Outstanding Trainee Recognition." The recipients were:

- Customer Services Service Center
Kristina Wallig
Kimberly Skaff
- Budget & Financial Management
Evelyn Yang
- Organizational Resources
Ashley Tracy
Mike Mitchell

- Client Solutions/Real Estate Acquisition
Yaniv Arazy
- Design and Construction – Capital Construction Projects
Pat McCarthy
Ron Snow
- Land Port of Entry
William Chapman
James Guidos
- Ohio Service Center
Shawna Goldner
Jordan Dykstra
- Michigan Service Center
Rebecca Hoover
Patrick Russell
- Southern Illinois/Indiana Service Center
Douglas Gerlemann
- Minnesota/Wisconsin Service Center
Michelle Bies
- Greater Chicagoland Service Center
Lindsey Dault
Eric Firestone
- Chicago Regional Office
Ryan Beard

-Mike Mitchell & Kristina Wallig

Forum 2009

Taking in the sights of Chicago

The Horizon Committee welcomed the Trainee Forum fine fashion with flip-floppies on a boat-boat! If you don't watch Saturday Night Live, go to YouTube and search "I am on a boat," and you will understand.

The Weber Grill was the venue for dinner and interacting with fellow trainees. There were approximately 45 trainees in attendance. The food was amazing, with meals ranging from a basic burger to the world-famous barbecued chicken or steak. Trainees were able to mingle for an hour or so during the meal. Soon after, even more fun began!

From dinner to the boat tour, we had an interesting downtown adventure. Some of the group went one



Save Ferris (State). (l-r): Michelle Bies, Eric Firestone, Joseph Blake, Lindsay Dault, David Zeeb, Josh Westhouse, Daniel P. Essenmacher, and Liz Madison tour Chicago's lakeshore.

way, while the rest went another. In fact, one group ended up so far across town that they took a limousine to the tour. Meanwhile, another group noticed they were walking the wrong way and was a little bit late. Everyone that was with our party

that night, save a few, was able to enjoy the boat tour.

The Horizon Committee made reservations with a sight-seeing boat tour that included fireworks. The boat trip was awesome with plenty of amenities. We were able to see one of the world's greatest skylines lit up at night. The tour included a narrator that called out important landmarks, who designed them, and other interesting information.

Everyone enjoyed themselves and can't wait for next year. Thank you so much to the Horizon Committee for coordinating everything, and to all the trainees who were able to enjoy the festivities. See you next year!

-Daniel P. Essenmacher



PBS Great Lakes Region trainees commemorate the conclusion of a fun and enriching 2009 Trainee Forum.

MANAGER SPOTLIGHT

Matt Poisson keeps in tune with new challenges

Biography

Matthew Poisson is a Customer Delivery Team Manager in the Customer Projects Service Center. Mr. Poisson's team oversees the portfolio of space assignments for the Department of the Treasury, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of Energy.

Mr. Poisson holds a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and a Masters in Business Administration from Roosevelt University in Chicago. He is also the lead singer of "InRoads," a local cover band, and wowed the crowd at the 2008 Holiday party.

Additionally, Mr. Poisson is the proud father of 10-month old Anthony, who he is raising to be an avid Chicago Cubs fan by taking him to over a dozen games this season.

Interview

1. How did you get your start at GSA, and how did you get to your current position?

During my junior year of college at UIC, I was looking for internships and GSA approached me. I started as a GS-3 co-op employee, filing drawings and doing basic clerical work on the 40th floor of the JCK. After my graduation from UIC, I was hired/converted as an electrical engineer and began running below-prospectus projects in the Design and Construction Branch of Property Management.

I then became a Lead Project Manager working in the Technical Services Branch in Southern Illinois and Indiana. Following that, I took a position as a supervisor in the Technical Services Branch for the state of Ohio (this was before the



region was broken into "Service Centers").

In October of 2004, I became a Customer Delivery Team Manager in the Customer Projects Division (now Customer Projects Service Center).

2. Do you have any advice for employees new to the GSA?

The best advice I could give is to embrace your rotational assignments within GSA. I took brief rotations as a property manager and as a contract specialist.

While I was a supervisor in Technical Services, I sought an opportunity to become a Regional Account Manager (RAM) for the USMS [United States Marshals Service] before the formal RAM program existed. I volunteered for this additional duty in order to learn more about other parts of the organization. Learning more about the customer, their budgetary constraints, and their space needs, helped position me to take a role in what is now the Customer Projects Service Center.

GSA is a very large organization with many opportunities. Search for and create opportunities to learn and grow here – don't just wait for opportunities to come to you. Also, it is very important to know how what

you do fits in with the rest of the organization, and rotations are very helpful in gaining understanding of how all the parts fit together.

3. What information and training has been most vital to your success at GSA?

Learning from subject matter experts has taught me a lot about my job throughout my career. Formal education can only take you so far. We often wind up working in positions unrelated to our formal education, and that is where learning from the experts throughout the organization comes in. I never would have thought, after graduating with a B.S. in Electrical Engineering, that I would be a Customer Delivery Team Manager.

Recently, the most interesting class I've taken was an overview of the Federal Budget Process. The class explained how Congress compiles, reviews, and passes the appropriation bills that fund the agencies and how the money works its way down to the agency level. One of the most beneficial parts of the class was reading through the GSA Appropriations Act to see how GSA is actually funded.

4. What interesting projects are currently on your desk?

Currently, my team is working on a National Park Service project for the Department of the Interior. We are working with the City of International Falls, Minnesota, as the developer, to potentially develop a landsite for National Park Service headquarters, office space, and a museum. This is a high-profile project with lots of Congressional interest, and has kept me quite busy.

As part of the process, the GSA team met with a counsel man, the

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Michigan trainees batting 1.000

On June 17, trainees from the Great Lakes Region's Michigan Service Center threw a graduation party at Bookie's Bar and Grille in Detroit for Jamika Harris and Shekita Wimberly. Both completed their final panel reports and have officially graduated from the Trainee Program.

The trip also served as a farewell to Shekita as the Service Center coordinator. She made sure to take plenty of pictures in celebration of the event.

Miranda Webster organized the outing, as well as a shuttle to transport everyone to and from the event. As a result, this may become the newest tradition in Detroit.

* * *

Mechanical Engineer Sandra "Vidi" Chavez of the Michigan Service Center recently became the state's first Accredited Professional for GSA under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program.

After studying for months and passing a three-hour exam on green building design and efficient building operations, Vidi has distinguished herself with the knowledge and skills



Trainees in Detroit celebrate their newest program graduates. Back row, from left to right: Miranda Webster, Jerrud Parker, Patrick Russell, Seth LaRocque, April Miller, Nic Hus, Daniel Nitu.

Front row (l-r): Jamika Harris, Becky Hoover, Allison Crews, Rachel Ohman, Jeffery Carpenter, Shekita Wimberly

to successfully steward the LEED certification process.

* * *

On Friday, July 24, Michigan Service Center trainees attended a Detroit Tigers game. The Tigers played the Chicago White Sox and won 5-1.

Before and after the game, trainees, along with their friends and families, met up at local bars and restaurants for food and drinks.

Despite the heat, the trip proved to be fun, entertaining, and a great bonding experience.

-Seth LaRocque

Matt Poisson, Customer Delivery Team Manager

-Continued from page 4

city planner, and the mayor of International Falls a couple of weeks ago. We are now meeting with the Comptroller of the Department of the Interior to try to work through their budgetary concerns. I am not sure how it is going to turn out, but it has been interesting so far.

5. Can you tell us a bit about InRoads? When and where are you playing next?

I didn't join a band until I was in my mid 20's, but I have been playing with InRoads now for about 11 years, and I really enjoy it. It helps keep me sane! A lot of my friends play softball for a hobby. Well, I was never very good at softball, so I decided to join a band instead. I always had a love for music so I decided to work on some skills to make that possible.

I am the lead singer and play a little bit of guitar and harmonica. I also manage the business side of the band (booking gigs, etc.) We play

about two shows a month and just have a blast out there on stage. We usually draw 75 to 100 people, and there are a lot of GSA people who show up (you know who you are).

We have upcoming shows at Healy's Westside in Forest Park on September 26 and Galvin's Public House on October 10. Since it might be a little tacky to list my website here, if anyone wants to talk more about it, just stop on by.

-Caleb Hansen

Volleyball squad digs in for fun, teamwork

The end of summer was the end to GSA's inaugural sand volleyball season. Cutting to the chase, the Oily Oysters finished the season with a 9-12 record. It's a little lower than Horizon would like on its resume, but let's look at the bright side.

Even though the team ate more sand than the crowd who came to watch its games (seagulls), the losses on the court were certainly offset by the wins and the Oysters' spirit. Power forward and resident cheerleader Carly Thompson has dubbed this a "rebuilding year" for the team. We'll have to check her math, given there's been nothing to build from, but I think we can appreciate her optimism. Carly struck fear in the hearts of her opponents when charging the net for a spike like Misty May-Treanor, only to admittedly "get hit in the head with the ball because it came down at a weird angle." I didn't know gravity pulled objects north-northeast.

Many other GSA trainees participated to make the event worth the price of free admission. Irene Stamatakis won the team's "110% award." Greg Rackow was named the team's Most Valuable Player. His creation of the "Triangle of Doom" maneuver accounted for ex-



Set for success: Back row: William Chapman, Jessica Chapman. Front row (l-r): Amy Brentz, Nathan Ingersoll, Greg Rackow, Irene Stamatakis, Carly Thompson

actly 1.5 of the team's nine wins. Unfortunately "The Tomahawk," another of Greg's signature moves, was blamed for 12 of the teams' 12 losses, so maybe those MVP votes had a few hanging chads. Bridget Egan also made a guest appearance for the Oysters. The team was excited a recent graduate of the program helped out for one game. She seemed to have lived up to the hype, leading the Oysters to their most dominating victory of the season.

Although the Oysters cooperated well throughout the year, as an upstanding journalist, I had to refuse Caleb Hansen's bribes of Raw Bar money to report on the infighting that occurred on and off the court. Kimberly Skaff received flak from the team after suffering a wrist injury

early in the season to end her 2009 volleyball career. Kimberly, to my knowledge neither GSA nor the North Avenue Beach Volleyball Association tests for steroids... be a team player and get back out there.

Ironically, she received most of her criticism from teammate Ryan Beard. According to an unnamed source (this one I did accept a bribe from), Ryan attempted to play a match the day after a 200-mile, three-day bike ride. I don't know if he thought he was Superman, but that day volleyball truly was his kryptonite. Ryan would not stop complaining how his legs were hurting him. After being told by Nathan Ingersoll that maybe he should sit this one out, Ryan went to a karaoke bar with his bike-riding friends to drink his sorrows away. Proof can be found at YouTube.com. Accordingly, I will accept bribes to give you the link.

All feuds aside, the Oily Oysters found a way to come out of their first season with some wins under their belt, and their heads held high. Maybe Kyle Van Someren can use some of his memories from the season to create a slogan for next year's team. Might I suggest, "A Pursuit of Volleyball, A Legacy Unknown..."

-Brian Bogucki

Enjoying local pubs and homegrown grub

Fertile ground for service-minded trainees

Despite a few sprinkles, a handful of trainees volunteered at Ginkgo Organic Gardens in Lakeview on July 23.

Trainees helped this not-for-profit community garden plant carrot seeds, clear out overgrown trees, and tend to ailing potato plants. They even got to sample some of the tasty produce. This work helped the garden prepare for its weekend harvest and donation of organic produce to a local food pantry.

Think global, drink local

On July 12, several trainees headed to Lincoln Park for an educational and thirst-quenching tour of the Goose Island Brewery. Trainees learned about Goose Island's brewing process, from picking the hops to drawing craft beers from the tap. The tasting part of the tour included samples of 312 Urban Wheat Ale and India Pale Ale.

Trainees rounded out the social event with food at Goose Island's brewpub.

-Evelyn Yang



Carly Thompson, Brian Bogucki, and Ryan Beard sample some of Chicago's finest hometown brew at Goose Island.

Horizon of Excellence

In every edition of the *Sunburst*, we like to shine the spotlight on a few top-performing trainees in **Horizon of Excellence**. In this edition, Daniel P. Essenmacher and Andrew Daglas tackle difficult questions posed by *Sunburst* writer and fellow trainee Patrick J. McEleney.

Daniel P. Essenmacher

Interesting Fact: I would like to get an MBA.

Where did you go to school? When did you graduate? Major? Ferris State University, 2008, Facilities Management.

Who are your favorite sports teams? Michigan State University or Ohio State University - College; Pistons - Pro Basketball.

What do you enjoy doing outside of the office? Working on computers.

If you knew that today was your last day on Earth, how would you spend it? I would spend it skydiving. I probably won't ever do that unless I KNEW which day it was.

3 words your friends use to describe you? Personable, precise, and prompt.

What is your favorite movie? Classic - *Dumb and Dumber*; recent release - *Iron Man*.

What did you do before working at GSA? I worked in Facilities Management for a credit union in Michigan.

If you could have lunch with anyone, alive or deceased, who would it be and why? Frank Lloyd Wright, just to pick his brain.

Green outreach in Battle Creek

In May, Hal Bohan and I delivered a presentation to the Battle Creek Chapter of Green Drinks International. The presentation focused on energy efficiency, Energy Star ratings, and green buildings in relation to the Hart-Dole-Inouye Federal Center. Attendees included Battle Creek city officials, citizens, and local companies and non-profit organizations.

Green Drinks International strives to promote discussion of local environmental issues and connect the Battle Creek community to environmental efforts and information.

Also, Hal and I are Battle Creek Area Clean Water Partners Public



Dan Bartley addresses eco-friendliness and energy efficiency in the community

Education and Information Subcommittee members. The subcommittee aims to increase environmental awareness through education, advertising, and local events, such as River Clean-Up Day. Serving on this subcommittee led Hal and I to our participation in the local chapter of Green Drinks.

-Dan Bartley

Trainees briefed on LPOE's unique domain

Don Melcher, from the Land Ports of Entry Service Center, came



Land Ports of Entry's Don Melcher (center) shares his experience with trainees, including Jim Guidos (left) and William Chapman (right)

to Horizon's monthly meeting to discuss his job at GSA and what LPOE does for its customers.

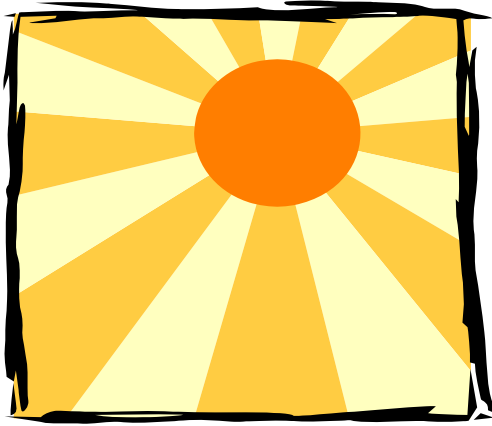
Melcher began by noting the locations of the Land Ports in Region 5 and mentioning the challenges the program faces. Each project presents a collection of challenges: from the terrain and weather, to the sentiment of local citizens and their governing officials.

He went on to discuss some of the larger projects LPOE is working on, including: the construction of a new Land Port of Entry at Warroad, Minnesota; the Feasibility Study of a new Land Port of Entry at Inter-

national Falls, Minnesota; and the roof replacement in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan – the first LPOE project in Region 5 to use American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding.

LPOE's main customer is Customs and Border Protection, a branch of the Department of Homeland Security. Since it inspects the people and vehicles crossing into the United States, CBP is considered the country's first line of defense. And, since GSA constructs and maintains our nation's Land Ports of Entry, the program is extremely critical.

-William Chapman



HORIZON

U.S. General Services Administration
Public Buildings Service

I hope you enjoyed this issue of Sunburst: A Horizon Newsletter! If you have any ideas for articles, or would like to submit your own, please send an email to ashley.tracy@gsa.gov or kristina.wallig@gsa.gov. If you are interested in assisting Kristina with the Sunburst newsletter, please contact her.

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Horizon of Excellence

Andrew Daglas

Interesting Fact: In college, I interned at WGN Sports. I got to work on the production of Cubs, White Sox, and Bulls telecasts, including assisting at the announcer's table and broadcast booths. I also had the chance to watch part of a game from atop the Wrigley Field scoreboard.

Where did you go to school? When did you graduate? Major? I have a journalism degree (2003) and an MBA (2008), both from DePaul University.

Who are your favorite sports teams? Bulls, Bears, Blackhawks, Cubs.

What do you enjoy doing outside the office? I read a lot, and I enjoy fairly obscure strategy board games (a.k.a. "eurogames"). On a related note, I'm single.

If you knew today was your last day on Earth, how would you spend it and why? Laundry. Guess I couldn't put it off any longer at that point.

3 words your friends would use to describe you? Please go away.

What is your favorite movie? *The Apartment*, with Jack Lemmon.

What did you do before working at GSA? Most recently, third-party transportation logistics. I did a brief stint as a sportswriter after college.

If you could have lunch with anyone, alive or deceased, who would it be and why? Teddy Roosevelt. Or Anne Hathaway.



becky hoover 7-09 copr.

