

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION



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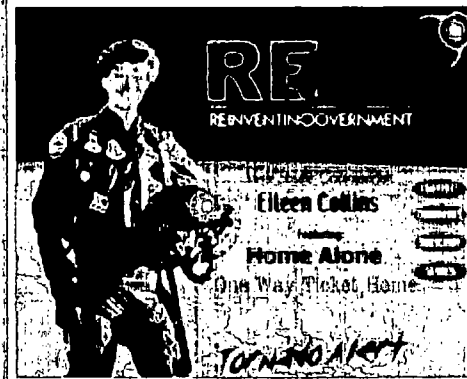
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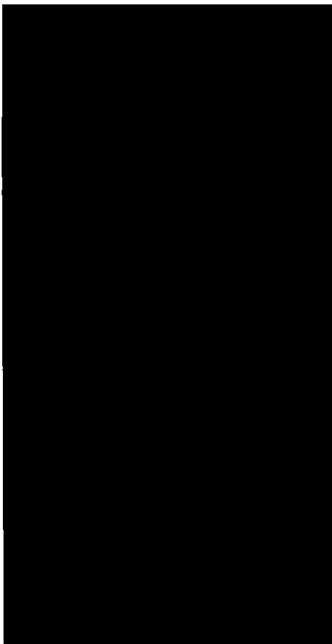
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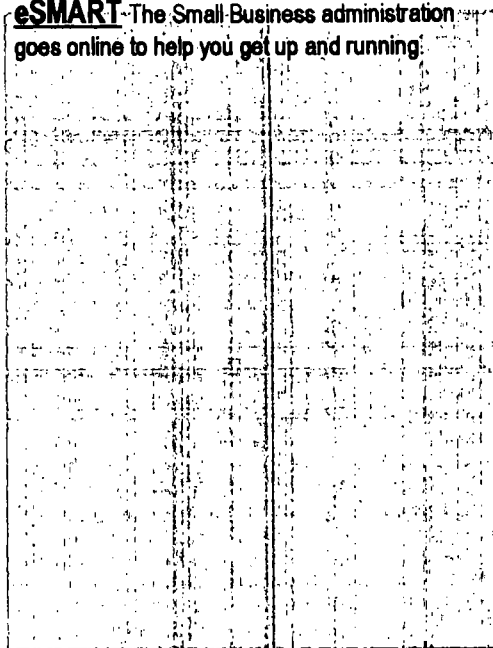
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gangleader stabbed four times becomes a community minded straight A student, and robotics captain.

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REGO

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Papers](#)**A Message from the Vice President**

In September of 1993, the President asked me to lead an effort to make government work better, cost less, and, most of all, get results that Americans care about, in other words to reinvent it. This was a pretty big job, but it was one that we knew had to be done. After all, we had discovered a lot about the government that just didn't make sense. For example - did you know that the government once had a 2,700 word regulation on how to make french fries? Or that the Navy had its own dairy farm?

Six years later, reinvention has reduced the size of government by about 350,000 people ...and a few hundred cows. Now we have the smallest government since the Administration of John Kennedy. We cut 640,000 pages of internal regulations and another 16,000 pages of regulations that affected businesses and the public. Now the government can have the same french fries as everybody else.



If you're wondering about the title of the magazine, REGO is short for reinventing government, and, as I like to say, it's Gore spelled sideways. It's online because of my dedication to using technology to bring government information and services directly to people in their homes, in libraries, in community centers, and in schools.

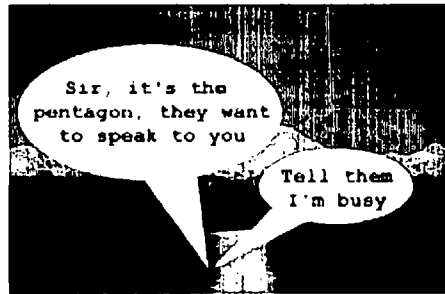
REGO magazine has a humorous side, but it's mostly about how reinventing government has affected the lives of individual people. From the factory worker whose life was saved by a public-private partnership, to the sick child who can now explore his own planet because of NASA technology, these stories show that the promise of reinvention is becoming reality.

Enjoy the premiere issue of REGO magazine, I hope it's stories **surprise** and move you.

Reporting for REGO, this is Al Gore.

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Government**Well it Seemed Like a Good Idea - at the Time****Dialing for Dollars - Navy's Waterproof Phone**

A submersible phone: A great gift idea for the water enthusiast on your holiday gift list!



A few years back, the Navy bought submersible phones for their carriers because, unlike regular phones, these phones still work perfectly if the carrier sinks. Sounds smart, right? Think again! Each submersible phone costs about \$500 compared to about \$30 for a regular phone. At that rate, the Navy would have to sink 17 aircraft carriers to cover the cost difference of just one phone (*And, if that happens, the Navy has a lot more to worry about than the cost of a few telephones!*). So, the Navy smartened up and switched to common desk models costing about \$30 each.

Less is More - The Federal Specifications for French Fries

If you think the influence of a document is proportional to its length, think again. A comparison of these influential and not-so-influential documents suggests otherwise:

The Pledge of Allegiance	31 Words
Preamble to the U.S. Constitution	38 Words
The Gettysburg Address	266 Words
Declaration of Independence	300 Words
Federal Specifications for Making French Fried Potatoes	2,700 Words

As part of its effort to cut red tape, the Federal government purged thousands of pages of lengthy, and often ludicrous, product specifications. These pages: described how to make French fries; defined acceptable ashtrays (or, in government-speak, "ash receivers, tobacco [desk type]"); provided instructions on how to determine fish freshness; and so on. Does anyone miss these tomes? Just late-night talk-show hosts who used them for comic relief.



Potatoes,
French Fried
(edible type)

Cash Cows - The Navy Dairy

A sprawling dairy farm at the U. S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland long outlived its original purpose. Why? Apparently because Congress was overly-attached to its own creation.

Congress created and stocked the dairy with cows during the early 1900s. The idea was that the facility would provide the Academy with its own milk supply after

contaminated milk from a commercial producer caused a typhoid outbreak there. But, by the mid-1960s, improved processing techniques virtually eliminated the threat of disease from commercial milk. The White House designated facility became increasingly expensive to run.

WASHINGTON

The Navy repeatedly sought Congressional approval to stop operating the dairy, but it wasn't until 1997, when the price of the dairy's milk exceeded supermarket prices by 30 cents per gallon, that Congress finally agreed. The Navy milked its last cow on August 8, 1998.

Purchasing Power - Government Procurement

Before reinvention, the typical Federal worker was not authorized to buy so much as a \$4.00 stapler for the office. The government vested this purchasing power solely in a group of specialists trained to confront (and sometimes create) the mountains of paperwork government purchases involved. This policy wasted time and effort and even prevented Federal employees from taking advantage of cost-saving sales. When it came to buying computers, the process was even worse - - so cumbersome, in fact, that by the time the computers arrived, they were obsolete.

Since 1993, however, a series of reinvention initiatives has streamlined Federal purchasing procedures. Thanks especially to a recommendation from Vice President Gore's National Partnership for Reinventing Government (NPR), enacted into law by Congress, the Federal government can now empower individual employees to make small purchases (up to \$2500.00) using bank credit cards. Federal workers can now shop around and buy as quickly as they can say, "charge-it," saving the government time and money. (For more information on credit card acquisition, Federal employees should contact their agency Procurement Office.)

For more information, visit the [NPR website](#), or contact [William Ryan](#) at (202) 694-0075.

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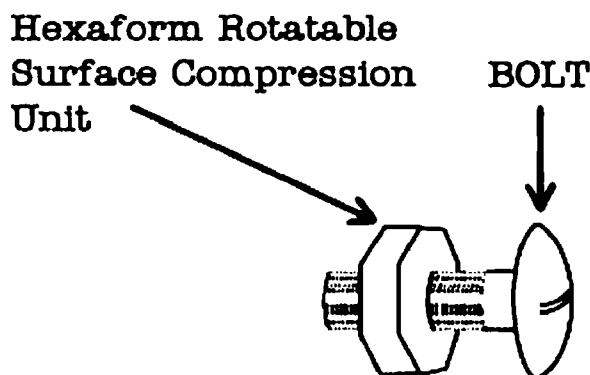
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THE WHITE HOUSE

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Partnership
for
Reinventing
Government](#)**I WANT YOU
TO KNOW****Dear Uncle Sam**

Question: Uncle Sam, sometimes you talk a little funny. Once I heard that you had hexiform rotatable surface compression units? What are those?

Answer: Let's see, the answer to this could be a little complicated. The diagram below explains it best.



On June 1, 1998, President Clinton signed a memo telling all government employees to start using plain language that people will understand. So, I can't have hexiform rotatable surface compression units anymore, only nuts (and any big organization has a few of those).

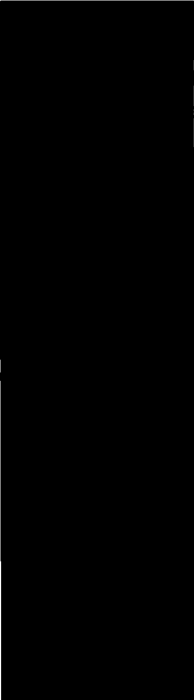
Question: Uncle Sam, I heard that the Federal government has eliminated 640,000 pages of internal regulations and another 16,000 pages of regulations affecting businesses and the public. I'm doing a science project, and I'd like to know how much the eliminated regulations weighed.

Answer: Well, let's see. Those 656,000 pages of regulations used about 328,000 sheets of paper. There are 200,000 sheets of standard U.S. office paper in a ton. So, the eliminated regulations weighed about 1.64 tons.

Question: Uncle Sam, where did the phrase "red tape" come from?

Answer: Back in the 1800s, the Federal government folded long, bulky documents into three sections and then bound them together with narrow red ribbon. To free the documents, the reader first had to spend time cutting and removing the red ribbon. In more modern times, tape is used for binding. So, "red tape" now describes any time-consuming, seemingly unnecessary bureaucratic requirement that delays getting the job done, i.e., reading the documents.

Question: Uncle Sam, I understand that government reinvention improvements are saving lots of money. So, where's the money going, and how is it being used?



Answer: Actually, we have two kinds of savings. First, some of our improvements help us plan better, so we can budget the anticipated savings for new projects or programs. That way, in planning the budget, the money can go to the agencies that need it most. Second, unexpected savings, or budget surpluses, go back to the U.S. Treasury. This money then goes to pay down the national debt. Six years ago, our national debt had grown to a whopping 50 percent of our annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Now, it is down to nearly 40 percent of our GDP and falling. Reducing our national debt means lower Federal interest costs in the future, lower interest rates, and more prosperity for all Americans.

Question: Uncle Sam, where did you get your name?

Answer: No one is certain, but the most popular theory is that my name came from Sam Wilson, a meat packer in Troy, New York. During the war of 1812, each barrel of meat he prepared for the U. S. Army was stamped *US*. Supposedly, the soldiers he supplied came to call Sam Wilson "Uncle Sam." Over time, "Uncle Sam" became synonymous with the U.S.A. My first picture - - the red, white, and blue clad figure that you know best - - appeared on a U. S. Army recruiting poster created by James Montgomery Flagg in 1916. A slightly altered version of that poster's original picture of me is at the top of this article.

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Tornado Alert

Several hundred people escaped injury and avoided tragedy when alert school officials stopped a high school basketball game in Beebe, Arkansas, on January 21, 1999 and emptied the gymnasium. Only minutes later, a tornado ripped through the school campus, destroying the building. School officials credited an upgraded National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) weather warning system with alerting them to the incoming storms, enabling them to make the lifesaving decision.



"We are very fortunate," said Dr. Keith Williams, Beebe School District Superintendent. "We never thought something like this would happen. It would be hard to say what would have happened if we hadn't stopped the game."

Early Warnings Heightened Awareness

Earlier in the day, around two in the afternoon, a NOAA weather radio in the Beebe High School office sounded an alarm warning of dangerous thunderstorms building and possible tornadoes forming. Williams took the alarm seriously and met with Athletic Director Hal Crisco about basketball games scheduled for that evening. They tuned to Little Rock television station KTHV to follow Doppler radar images of the approaching storms and monitor NWS reports. The news wasn't good. The images showed the structure, probable paths, and evolving intensity of the storms. The potential danger was clear.

"We were looking at the pictures, and I didn't like what I was seeing," Williams said. "We called the school in Atkins and tried to cancel the game, but the buses of players had already left. So, we reluctantly decided to let them play, especially since it was already a make-up game."

Just before dark, NWS reports showed a tornado on the outskirts of Beebe. Sheets of violent hail fell between interludes of swirling winds. But, it ended quickly. Maybe the worst was over, Williams and Crisco hoped, as a calm followed the first line of squalls.

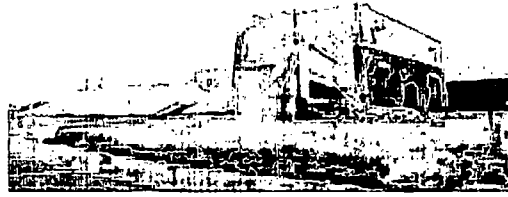
The Right Decision

Just before 6:00 p.m., close to 400 people crowded into the gym for the Beebe vs. Atkins girls' basketball game. Parents, students, and residents filled the stands, and more spectators kept arriving for the boys' game to follow. Meanwhile, Williams, who never missed a game, stayed home to monitor the weather reports. He was glad he made that choice because, at 6:30 p.m., NWS radar showed a second line of storm cells building to the southeast of town. "I knew it was heading straight for us," Williams recalls.

Williams called Crisco at the gym, and they decided to stop the games. It was a tough decision. The shelter of the gym and the warm cheering of the crowd made the threat of tornadoes seem far away. "I talked to the coaches and some of the parents and told them Dr. Williams was at home watching the storm, and that it appeared to be getting much worse," Crisco said. "I got on the PA [public address system] and told everyone it was in our best interest to clear the gym. I offered them a choice of staying at the school or heading home. Some people were disgruntled and made comments that these things [warnings] happen all the time. They wanted us to finish the games."

But Crisco didn't back down. He ordered everyone out.

Half an hour later, the gym was deserted, and the night erupted. The shrieking roar of wind and sounds of crashing debris lasted about 20 seconds. In a flash, heavy steel beams and twisted siding buried the basketball court and stands where, only minutes before, players and fans had been cheering.



"We lost close to half our facilities," Williams said of the campus, which housed three separate school buildings. But, standing in the tangled remains of the gymnasium, Williams and Crisco realized how lucky the residents of Beebe and Atkins were. "Definitely [if we hadn't canceled the games] there would have been severe injuries, if not deaths," Crisco said. "We're extremely thankful. Not a single student was hurt. It was amazing."

The Other Hero: NWS

The Other Hero:

NWS Williams and Crisco made their difficult decision to end the game and empty the gymnasium based on information provided by the National Weather Service, beginning with the sounding of their NOAA weather radio.

Recent upgrades in our national weather warning system, and technological advancements in weather analysis and forecasting, also have saved thousands from injury or death. Over the past decade, the United States has spent \$4.5 billion to modernize its weather forecasting and warning systems and improve broadcast networks, radar systems, and satellites to analyze global weather activity and warn people of danger.

The lives saved in Beebe is just one example of how early information and warning signals can save lives. Following a tornado that killed more than 20 people in a rural Alabama church on Palm Sunday in 1994, Vice President Al Gore set a goal to make NOAA Weather Radio receivers as common as smoke detectors in American homes. In fact, the NWS goal is to extend the coverage provided by the NOAA Weather Radio transmitter network to at least 95 percent of the United States. Since the initiative began, the National Weather Service and the Vice President's National Partnership for Reinventing Government have been actively promoting public/private sector partnerships to provide the needed resources. More than 75 new weather radio transmitters already have been installed through grass roots partnerships combining the resources of private enterprises, associations, and local, state and Federal government agencies. NOAA Weather Warning System radios, with early warning alarms, are now available at all popular electronics stores.

In 1998, the average lead-time for tornado warnings was 11 minutes - triple what it was 20 years earlier. Earlier warnings give people time to seek shelter and save lives.

Flash flood warnings in 1998 averaged a lead-time of 50 minutes, a huge improvement over the 7.7 minute average in 1987.

NOAA Weather Warning System radios, with early warning alarms, are now available at all popular electronics stores.

For more information, visit the [NOAA Weather Radio Internet site](#), or contact Gloria Washington at (202) 482-4190.

Related Resources:
[NOAA Internet site](#)



National Weather Service Internet site

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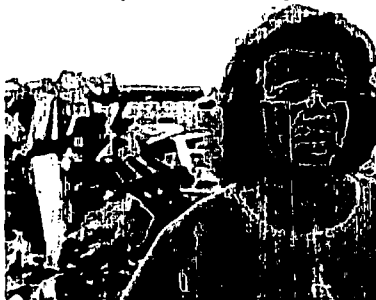
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[FEMA](#)

Safe Rooms: Getting Communities Ready Before Disaster Strikes

The freight-train-like sounds and dark funnel clouds of a tornado are among the most frightening weather phenomena known to man. Tornadoes can occur in any state at any time, but they are most common in the Midwest and Southeast during March and April. They form with little warning and strike with a vengeance. Long-term preparedness is the only defense residents have.



Beth Bartlett in front of her home. Management Agency (FEMA) is doing.

Just ask Beth Bartlett of Del City, Oklahoma. Last spring, a "safe room" built in her home saved her life, as well as her mother's and the lives of their four pets. Their neighborhood was completely destroyed, and a neighbor was killed, during a tornado that struck there. But, they survived thanks, in part, to work the Federal Emergency

Project Impact

Through "Project Impact: Building Disaster Resistant Communities," FEMA is reinventing the way America handles disasters. The strategy is to help communities help themselves *before* a disaster strikes.

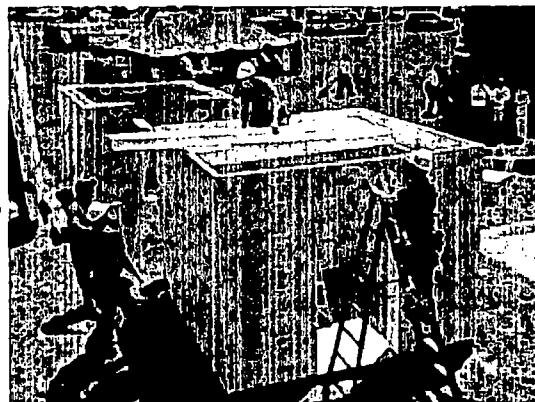
The initiative is about getting businesses and other organizations to work together to head off the potential ravages of a natural disaster, including minimizing a disaster's effects on residents, businesses, and community infrastructure.

Forging a Change

Project Impact began in December 1997 with seven communities participating in the pilot program. Its purpose: to encourage communities to form public/private partnerships to limit potential damage before disasters strike instead of spending millions to pick up the pieces after the fact. Today, more than 120 communities nationwide are participating in Project Impact.

One city where Project Impact is making a difference is Oakland, California, one of the original seven pilot communities. The city established "Project SAFE," a community partnership for "safety and future empowerment." The partnership includes local businesses, citizens, grassroots organizations, the City of Oakland government, the California Office of Emergency Services, and FEMA.

In the spring 1998, dozens of student volunteers got Project SAFE rolling by retrofitting over 150 homes in Oakland through a community project called "Project Impact Spring Break." Next, during Project SAFE's "Week of Caring," four volunteer teams of firefighters, AmeriCorps members, and others spread across the city each day to make homes of elderly and low-income residents more disaster-resistant. The teams installed smoke detectors and cupboard latches, strapped water heaters and freestanding cabinets to house frames, and rigged safety releases on window security bars.



Workers assemble a saferoom Photo by Dave Gattley/FEMA

Tornado Damage Reduction

One of the most valuable actions citizens can take to minimize damage from a tornado is to build "Tornado Safe Rooms." The safe room that saved Beth Bartlett and her family is a cast-in-place concrete room that normally serves as a roomy closet. It cost between \$3000 and \$4000, although safe rooms can be built for as



Inside a model saferoom

Photo by Dave Gattley/FEMA

low as \$2000, depending on size and location. Safe rooms can be built above ground or below, within a home or attached to one. Some are built of reinforced concrete and some of wood-and-steel walls anchored to concrete slab foundations or floors. But, when constructed according to FEMA specifications, all can withstand winds of up to 250 miles per hour and the impact of objects traveling at 100 miles an hour.

Help is Just a Click Away

The safe room project is part of FEMA's Project Impact. Residents of tornado-prone areas can now get construction plans directly from the Internet by accessing FEMA's Internet site. Once on the site, click on "mitigation," then click on Tornado Safe Rooms. (Comprehensive information about Project Impact is available on the Internet site as well.)

The construction plans include a 25-page illustrated publication, "Taking Shelter from the Storm: Building a Safe Room Inside Your House," that outlines the basics of in-house safe room shelters, including designs for several different kinds of safe rooms, materials, and construction cost estimates. (You also can order the publication and construction plans free of charge by calling **FEMA Publications at [888] 565-3896.**)

The evidence is clear that Project Impact and safe rooms are common sense approaches for dealing with disasters before they happen. A disaster-resistant community is able to bounce back from a natural disaster with far less loss of property and much less cost for repairs. And, the investment is well worth the cost. FEMA estimates that for every dollar spent in damage prevention, two dollars are saved in repairs.

For more information about FEMA and Project Impact, during regular business hours, contact FEMA's Public Affairs Office at (202) 646-4600. Round-the-Clock information about FEMA and Project Impact also can be obtained by calling FEMA Fax-on-Demand at (202) 646-FEMA or the FEMA Radio Network at (800) 323-5248.

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Saving Lives, Helping Business

An iron worker with 20 years of experience and two previous falls -- one that kept him out of work for a full year -- slipped on an icy bar joist and fell toward the ground. This time, his fall was broken by a safety system harness. He was unharmed and returned to work almost immediately.

A deck installer was leaning forward and fell. Fortunately, he was caught by a cable that was part of a fall protection system laid on the deck. He literally climbed back up on the deck by himself, got new safety equipment, reinstalled the cable, and went back to work. He would have fallen 42 feet if the fall protection system had not been in place.

These two workers, and thousands of others like them, would have been maimed or killed in previous years without these safety systems. Thanks to the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), thousands of lives been saved, and millions of dollars have not been spent on treating injuries and illnesses.

A Safe Way to Work

OSHA encourages all businesses to set up safety and health programs that prevent workplace fatalities, injuries, and illnesses.

Today, fewer workers are injured and die on the job thanks to OSHA standards, enforcement and cooperative relationships with employers. But, over 6,000 workers still die each year on the job, more than 6 million are injured, and almost 500,000 experience occupational illnesses. For example, an estimated 50,000 workers die every year as a result of long-term on-the-job exposure to cancer causing agents like asbestos and benzene, respiratory disease agents like cotton dust and silica, and liver, kidney, and cardiac toxins.

As OSHA approaches its 30th anniversary, the agency is exploring new and innovative ways to protect American workers. As part of its "reinvention," OSHA is changing the way it does business by taking a more common sense approach to worker safety and health.

OSHA Saves Lives

Since 1970, when Congress created the agency and fatality rates began dropping, the overall workplace death rate has been cut in half. That's more than 100,000 workers who didn't die because of improved safety and health.

For example, OSHA's cotton dust standard virtually eliminated new cases of brown lung disease in the textile industry; deaths from trench cave-ins declined by 35 percent after OSHA's trenching standard was revised; and OSHA's lead standard reduced blood poisoning in battery plant and smelter workers by two-thirds.

Experience also shows that OSHA inspections can have positive results. Overall injury and illness rates have declined in the industries where OSHA has concentrated its attention.

These companies, large and small, in a variety of industries, lose fewer workdays and reduce workers' compensation costs. That translates into big savings for employers and safer, more healthful workplaces for employees.

OSHA Partnerships for Safety and Health

OSHA's partnerships with industry and labor through its Voluntary Protection

Programs (VPP) and OSHA Strategic Partnership Programs (OSPP) have achieved positive results. Since 1982, the injury rate for VPP participants has been 50 percent below Bureau of Labor Statistic rates for their respective industries. And, a recent interview of OSPP participants at nearly 3,000 work-sites demonstrates that comprehensive safety and health programs reduce injuries, illnesses, and workers' compensation costs while maintaining or improving production.

In 1995, OSHA's Atlanta East Office was one of the first area offices redesigned to improve customer service under OSHA's GRIP program: Getting Results and Improving Performance. Atlanta East joined forces with Argonaut Insurance Co. to provide a safety seminar and onsite risk assessments. One of the risk assessments, conducted jointly with a Georgia Tech consultation program and Argonaut, led Horizon Steel Erectors, Inc., to establish a 100 percent fall protection program in all phases of construction. In addition, Horizon Steel implemented front-line accountability that resulted in a 96 percent reduction in accident costs per man-hour (from \$4.26 to \$.018). Total costs of claims also fell from \$1.063 million to \$13,200.

Help for Small Businesses

Since small businesses are particularly vulnerable to workplace injuries, OSHA targets many resources at these employers.

These include free on-site consultations, interactive computer software, technical information, and easy-to-follow guides for specific OSHA standards.

In addition, in March 1999, OSHA hosted its first small business forum reaching out to small businesses and letting them know what help is available. For more information on all OSHA services for small business, visit the OSHA website (for your convenience, this site includes links to local OSHA offices throughout the U.S. as well as links to the Small Business Administration website) or contact Art DeCoursey, OSHA's Small Business Liaison at (202) 693-1900.

If you have an EMERGENCY and need to report a fatality or imminent, life-threatening situation, call OSHA's toll free hotline at (800) 321-OSHA (6742).


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One-Way Ticket Home

If you watch television, go to movies, or listen to political comedians, you might think that Federal, state, and local government agencies waste lots of time arguing over jurisdiction. To the contrary, today's reinvented governments at all levels know that what's impossible for one to do alone is possible when government services partner for community solutions. Take the case of Brenda, Dudley, and Miranda McConnell.

To Brenda, it looked like love. And, it wasn't long into their courtship before Dudley McConnell asked her to be his wife. On the surface, McConnell seemed to embody the American dream. A U.S. citizen working in Taiwan, his career with General Electric appeared to be solid and on the rise. For Brenda, a native of Taiwan, the marriage meant security, love, and protection.

What pulled Dudley McConnell into the relationship is less certain, but one thing is clear: by the time their daughter Miranda was born in 1993, one year after their marriage, the McConnells' relationship had turned toxic, marked by violence, abuse, and Dudley's relentless campaign to terrorize and control Brenda Chen McConnell.

A Domestic Nightmare

The beatings began when Brenda was pregnant. "When I was two months pregnant, he dragged me by the hair, laughing and smiling and kicking my back. I did my best to cover my stomach. He just laughed." The violence continued, but soon Brenda was no longer the only victim. McConnell locked up Miranda in a dark bathroom all night, letting her cry, and threatening to beat Brenda if she went to her child's aid.

The family's life spiraled downward. Reports about domestic violence filtered back to Dudley's employer. In 1994, General Electric transferred the McConnells to New York, and in 1995, they terminated Dudley's employment. Dudley decided to go to Portland, Oregon, where he said another job was waiting. He went out first. Brenda and Miranda were to follow.

A Temporary Reprieve

"It was the happiest period in my marriage," said Brenda McConnell, referring to the time that she and Miranda stayed behind in New York, safe, at least for a short time, from Dudley's rage and abuse. The respite did something else as well. It gave Brenda confidence in her ability to survive without her husband. And, it renewed her determination to tell Dudley that she and Miranda were leaving.

At 11 P.M. on July 27, 1995, Dudley McConnell responded to his wife's request for a divorce by breaking down the door to their house in Utica, New York, forcing his way in and beating her savagely. Brenda managed to escape from the house, but when she returned later with the authorities, Dudley was gone. Miranda, then two years old, had disappeared with him.

Brenda Chen McConnell wasn't sure where to turn.

Making the System Work

Local authorities said this was a domestic case, a situation that generally didn't warrant filing a Missing Persons Report, at least not until 48 hours had lapsed. Brenda called the local Legal Aid Society office hoping to set up an immediate appointment. She left a message and waited. It was September when they returned her call. Worse yet, the first appointment Legal Aid could offer Brenda was in October. She waited again. When Brenda finally met with Legal Aid officials, they told her they couldn't do much unless she could supply Dudley's address in Oregon. Finally, in December, Legal Aid filed a petition on Brenda's behalf with the court, even though Dudley McConnell's address was still unknown.

In May 1996, Legal Aid lost its contract with the state of New York, and Brenda was left standing alone in front of a judge - a judge who decided to cut through the red tape to help Brenda and Miranda. He pulled aside attorney William Koslosky, who happened to be in court that day working on another abduction case, and he said, "Help this woman." At that moment, Brenda's life started to turn around.

"Empowerment" in Action

Bill Koslosky understood "the system." He had seen it work, and he had seen it fail. And, he knew that in every case, the difference depended on engaging officials who had been "empowered" to make the system work for their customers: people who understand that outcome is always more important than process.

Koslosky worked fast. First, he located Dudley McConnell who had returned to work in Taiwan. Next, Koslosky requested a trial to determine jurisdiction. McConnell sent his attorney to New York to argue that a U.S. court was not the proper place to decide Miranda's fate. The court disagreed, but McConnell didn't give up. He hired a new attorney who appeared before the court in New York to argue that McConnell should be awarded custody of Miranda. Again, the court ruled in Brenda's favor. She was awarded sole custody of her daughter.

Now, all Brenda McConnell and Bill Koslosky had to do was find Miranda and get her back.

The Right Team

By this time, Bill Koslosky had built a team of public employees who shared his commitment to Brenda and Miranda: Marc Saint-Victor, Jr. at the State Department's Office of Children's Issues; LaVerne Massie at State's Office of Passport Policy, Planning, and Advisory Services; FBI Special Agent James Durrane; the U.S. Marshal's Office; Ms. Leila Ben Debba at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; Congressman Sherwood Boehlert; and Investigators Convertino and Femia of the Utica Police Department. There were "unofficial" team members, too: public employees in the U.S. and abroad who demonstrated their commitment to victims of international child abduction through efforts that extended far beyond their official duties.

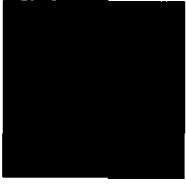
The primary obstacle to Miranda's retrieval was Dudley McConnell's valid U.S. passport. He had used it legally to return to work in Taiwan, and the Taiwanese government had no reason to force either Dudley or Miranda to leave.

Koslosky's "team" went to work. Since Dudley McConnell was a Federal fugitive, the U.S. Department of State revoked his passport, and the Taiwanese government revoked his Taiwanese working papers. Police arrested McConnell as an illegal alien and surrendered him to U.S. marshals. Then, Bill Koslosky got the call he and Brenda had been waiting for. It was time for Brenda to fly from Syracuse to Tokyo to Taipei where she would meet with the members of the Taiwanese police, the FBI, the U.S. Marshal's Office, and Taiwan's Criminal Investigative Bureau. The U.S. Department of Justice paid for her fare through a program administered by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

This time, the system was on Brenda's side. Authorities brought Dudley McConnell back to the United States for prosecution by Federal and state governments on charges of violating the International Parental Kidnapping Act and Custodial Interference. And, on June 11, 1999, Brenda brought Miranda back to her home in the United States.

For mother and daughter, the journey home signaled the end of one life and the beginning of a better one. For Bill Koslosky, who received no payment for his services, Miranda's arrival in the U.S. was the compensation of a lifetime. And, for Brenda McConnell's extraordinary "team" of public workers from all levels of government, Miranda's safe return meant much more than just meeting a professional challenge. Rescuing the little girl who had been abducted four years earlier was proof of their faith that a government of the people could, in the end, still be made to work *by* and *for* them.

For more information, contact the Office of Children's Issues at (202) 736-7000, or visit the Department of State website. Or contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children website.



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[NASA's Project ARC](#)

Steven Lugo's Story From Gang-Leader To Robotics Captain



Steven Lugo, 18, is a new member of NASA's Ames Research Center (ARC) team. Wang Government Services hired Steven to add his robotics skills to ARC's cadre of experts, and his credentials are impressive: Captain of the first-place and second-place teams in the 1999 NASA/FIRST Western Regional Robotics Competition (which also took home honors from the National Robotics Championship); and winner of the All Star [robotics] Rookie Award, the Honeywell Leadership in Control Award, and the National Robotics Championship Judges Award for Achievement and Innovation. In his spare time, Steven visits jails to talk to youths-at-risk about getting out of gangs, and he helps support his younger sister with his earnings. So, what makes Steven Lugo different from other community-minded young men?

In The Beginning

Travel back in time from 1999 to 1995 and meet Steven Lugo, age 14: expelled from San Jose High School because of low grades and excessive unexcused absences; full-time gang member, car thief, drug dealer, and street fighter; stabbed four times, twice in the head, in a fight he lost. Meet Steven's mother, Linda: shot six times at point blank range in 1988 by Steven's father, now serving a life sentence in Soledad Prison. And, meet Steven's friends: members of the notorious gang XIV Nortano of east-side San Jose.

In late 1995, district administration authorities placed Steven Lugo in the Broadway Continuation High School, a school of last resort for a few hundred students like himself, supervised by armed San Jose Police Officers. Steven knew this was his last chance to complete high school and turn his life around.

Fortunately for Steven, FIRST and NASA were there to help.

A Winning Partnership

FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) is a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing student interest in science, technology, and mathematics. In part, FIRST accomplishes this by supporting and sponsoring youth activities and national events that give students hands-on exposure to applications of engineering and science. These activities include an annual robot competition for high school youth, a tabletop program for middle school youth, and a teacher development program. And, these programs are all possible and successful because of FIRST's working partnerships with Federal and local governments, school systems, universities, and private businesses.

NASA's primary missions also include science and technology outreach and awareness, and NASA's Strategic Plan supports expanding Agency partnerships with private and academic organizations like FIRST that promote science and technology education. Promoting student interest in careers in science, engineering, and mathematics also is critical to the survival of the U.S. civil space program. According to Dave Lavery, Program Executive for Solar and Planetary Exploration, "If NASA is able to support 1000 high school students per year through programs that increase their interest in science and technology, and just 5% of them continue all the way through graduate school in a robotics-related discipline, that is... 50 new robotics experts each year that will become available to help the space program." "[In addition]," continues Lavery, "every company that manufactures a product, every company that sells or resells something manufactured in this country, every assembly plant, retailer, repair shop, and

production facility in this country is going to have exactly the same concern over the next 10 years. [So] it is in the best interests of all...to support programs which inspire young students to enter technical fields."

With this singleness of purpose and commitment, a partnership between NASA and FIRST was inevitable.

NASA has been a growing partner in the FIRST programs since they joined forces in 1995. Starting with one team that year sponsored by the Lewis (now John Glenn) Research Center, NASA is now the largest single organization participating in the FIRST program. In 1999, NASA sponsored 31 teams of 1100 students nationwide. NASA funding of this initiative increased from \$70,000 in 1995 to \$575,000 in 1999, and the projected Agency contribution in 2000 will be \$1,100,000. But, even more important are the more than 200 volunteer hours each involved NASA engineer devotes to sharing knowledge, experience, and insights with these students.

NASA Takes Another Partner

NASA's specific involvement with the Broadway Continuation High School began in an unusual way - - with a class in Tae Kwon Do. In April 1997, Mark Leon, Manager of the NASA Learning Technologies Project at ARC, approached Broadway Continuation High about a different kind of partnership. He wanted to volunteer his lunch hours to teach martial arts. Leon had two goals: to offer the students disciplined coping skills and to identify the school's best students to groom for Summer Student Positions at ARC. Within the first two months, Leon achieved both his goals, and he serendipitously hit upon the opportunity to add Broadway Continuation High to the NASA/FIRST partnership.

During the summer of 1997, Mark Leon learned about Dave Lavery's FIRST projects at ARC, including "BOTBALL." Leon was impressed and felt certain that Broadway Continuation High School students would benefit from this program. His office paid the school's registration fee and recruited the volunteer services of ARC engineers Steve Kyramarious and Robert Holmes. And, despite the challenges and difficult environment, Broadway students embraced the program and competed successfully in their first Bay Area robotics BOTBALL tournament.

Lots of Happy Endings

And, that brings us back to Steven Lugo. Steven completed his freshman year at Broadway Continuation High with "D" average. As a sophomore, he heard about the NASA robotics program and wanted to join the Broadway school team. But team membership was denied to students with lower than a 3.0 GPA - - and that was just the motivation Steven needed. By the end of the year, Steven had a 3.0 average. By the end of his junior year, Steven had a 4.0 GPA and was Captain of the Broadway Continuation High School Robotics Team. The rest is history.

Today, Steven Lugo has been clean and sober for all but one day of the last 20 months. He is having his 29 gang-related tattoos removed by laser treatment, and he is looking forward to college and a fulfilling career. "The NASA Robotics Project has opened up new doors for me," said Steven in a recent interview. "I am not proud of my past, but if it wasn't for my past, I wouldn't be where I am right now. I can never go back."

Inspired by the work NASA is doing, and supported by NASA's extensive and increasing partnerships for community solutions, Steven Lugo is a model of successful personal reinvention.

Steven's is just one of dozens of personal success stories. To learn more about the FIRST programs and accomplishments, visit their [Internet site](#).

For more information about the ARC Learning Technology Project, visit their [Internet site](#), or call Mark Leon at (650) 604-6498.

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School Daze It All Started as a "Hairball"

Jay Leno called it a "hairball." And he was right. The chart depicting the "flow" of the process students were expected to navigate to borrow money for college was a bureaucratic nightmare. Blue, green, red, and hot pink lines slithered over the paper, crisscrossing and merging at random points, colliding as they exited organizational boxes marked "School," "Guaranty Agency," and "Federal Reserve." The process was a perfect foil for a comedian's late-night attack on government-as-usual.

Reinventing the Process

The first step in reinventing any process is identifying the person who can make change happen. Meet Greg Woods, Chief Operating Officer in the Department of Education's Office of Student Financial Aid (SFA). Woods is a bona fide "change agent," the person selected, committed, and empowered to fix the "hair ball" process of applying for student financial assistance.

Woods was new to SFA, but it didn't take him long to see that the process was hopelessly intricate, riddled with red tape, and confounded by procedural requirements that scared-off some students and frustrated those who wanted to make it work. A "hairball," indeed!

SFA's goal was simple. "We want to create a system that focuses on making students aware of their responsibilities as borrowers, a system that educates them about borrowing money as well as paying it back," said Woods.

Borrowing from successful business practices, Woods and the SFA team went directly to their customers: student loan applicants and their parents. SFA conducted more than 200 "listening sessions" across the country, collecting and analyzing more than 8,000 customer comments. But, the fact-finding didn't stop there. The SFA team talked to every stakeholder who might contribute to, and benefit from, change: current loan-holding students and parents; high school counselors; college and university officials, lending organizations; and outreach organizations -- civic, church, and other mentoring groups. SFA asked these stakeholders three questions about the loan application process:

What works?
What doesn't work?
What should we change?

The answers were just what Woods expected. Students and other stakeholders wanted a performance-based organization, service equal to the best in business, emphasis on partnership, and SFA's commitment to organizing and managing like the best in business. Woods and his team are making those changes happen.

Meeting Student Needs: On-Line Loan Applications

The SFA "reinvention" brought swift change. First, students and parents now can apply for loans using a simple, electronic, on-line loan application form. In the past, a late decision to apply for a loan meant relying on regular mail services subject to delays. Today, the application process, including submission, takes only minutes, and for some students, this change alone has made a critical difference in jump-starting their college education.

Second, SFA is now treating students like the real-world customers they are. The SFA instructions, applications, and educational materials are easier to read and understand. There's a simplified way to ask questions and get the right answers, and there's even a simple way for students to make complaints and suggestions. Most important, SFA and its partners have made it easier for borrowers to pay back their loans.

Partnering for Success

Recognizing that schools are stakeholders in the student loan business, SFA also is tailoring its services to meet the needs of individual educational institutions. SFA is assigning to each school an "account manager" who can handle all its needs, and they are creating an SFA "University" to train school officials and administrators.

SFA also is working with its financial partners, the lending institutions that underwrite two-thirds of all student loans. These institutions, too, will have single points of contact within SFA, a "customer service team" with the know-how and the authority to solve problems. SFA and its financial partners also are creating a debt-counseling program for borrowers, a service to educate students in debt management and supply them with the financial planning information they need to head-off loan default and financial hardship.

User-Friendly Services

A truly reinvented organization ensures that its services are available to all. Greg Woods and his SFA team are working aggressively to make sure their services are accessible to physically challenged customers, potential borrowers whose first language is not English, and others with disabilities, learning difficulties, and special needs. Technology is playing a critical part in achieving these goals, and SFA is working toward electronic systems that will make accessing loans and paying them back as easy as logging on to a home computer.

For more information, contact Karen Santos Freeman at (202) 260-6536, or visit the following Internet sites:

Department of Education (general information)
Department of Education Student Financial Assistance Information
Department of Education Direct Loan Information
On-line Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

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Home Alone

It is 3:00 p.m. on a school day. Do you know where your children are?

Unfortunately, many parents don't. Perhaps because of work or other obligations, some parents simply can't supervise their school-aged children during non-school hours. As a result, at least 5 million children, and as many as 15 million, are left home alone each week.

The Importance of Supervision



activities.

Leaving children alone can be costly. Studies by the FBI and youth advocacy groups show that from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on schooldays, when supervision is scarcest, children are most likely to commit or be victimized by crimes. Unsupervised children are more likely to use alcohol, drugs, and tobacco, get poor grades, and drop out of school than children who participate in supervised, constructive after-school

"The period of time between the school bell and the factory whistle is a most vulnerable time for children. These are hours when children are more likely to engage in at-risk behavior and are more vulnerable to the dangers that still exist in too many neighborhoods and communities." Vice President Al Gore

How is the Federal Government Helping?

The Federal government can't provide individual after-school supervision for every child, but the government is helping to keep kids off the streets and out of trouble by supporting after-school programs across the country. In 1998, the National School Lunch Program was expanded to cover the costs of snacks provided by after-school programs located in poor areas. In 1999, the Federal government awarded \$93 million in new grants to help 176 communities establish and improve 21st Century Community Learning Centers: school buildings kept open and staffed after regular school hours for activities like literacy education, recreation, tutoring, and technology education. In addition, government-supported facilities such as national parks, gardens, historic sites, and research and computer laboratories now offer interesting and exciting opportunities to school-aged children.



"For working parents worried about what their children are doing after school, and for children who too often get in trouble in the after-school hours, these activities are critical. And, it's not just for the peace of mind of a worried and overworked parent. It's also for the learning opportunities available to our children. This initiative will help communities expand high-quality after-school programs so that young people can expand their horizons of creativity, receive one-on-one mentoring and tutoring, use computers, and learn skills they will need to compete and win in the 21st Century. This initiative will get existing resources to communities and kids that need them."

Vice President Al Gore

September 13, 1999

At Harper's Ferry in West Virginia, teenagers in the Youth Conservation Corps dress in Civil War-era costumes and lead guided tours. In Washington, DC, pre-teens in the National Park Service's Junior Ranger Program introduce visitors to the Vietnam Memorial. "I have seen these programs really change young people, particularly those from the inner city," observes Ramie Lynch, the National Park Service's Youth Programs Coordinator for the National Capital Region. "And, the children who participate in these after-school programs also appreciate them." Take the St. Louis, Missouri middle-school student who attended a government-sponsored summer program and said, "This project made me feel really good about myself."

Spreading the Word

It's likely that more children would take advantage, and benefit from, Federal after-school resources if their community leaders, teachers, school administrators, and parents knew about them. "Many parents, and people who run after school programs, have no idea about the availability of Federal resources for after-school programs, which range from providing mentors to after-school snacks. The information was hard to find and hard to use," according to former teacher, Felicia Wong.

But times have changed. Today, Vice President Gore's National Partnership for Reinventing Government (NPR), the Federal Executive Boards, and 17 Federal departments and agencies are partners in the Federal Support for Communities Initiative. And, they're spreading the word about after-school resources and programs.

Under this initiative, 15 cities and one state are holding After-School Resource Fairs where parents, care providers, teachers, and interested community members will meet representatives from many Federal agencies and non-profit organizations to learn more about programs and offerings that can assist children and youth. In addition, the NPR is consolidating information about available resources, including more than 100 grant programs for after-school programs and one-stop access to helpful Federal publications. All of this information, and more, can be found at the new After School Internet site, supported by the General Services Administration, with assistance from The Finance Project, a nonprofit organization. Here, kids and teens also will find links to many safe, fun, and enriching government Internet sites that let them do everything from building their own Galileo spacecraft to learning about Jake, a Labrador Retriever that works for the FBI.

For more information about government-sponsored after-school programs and resources, visit the After School website, or contact Pamela Johnson at (202) 694-0011.

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this story:[NASA](#)**Meet Space Shuttle Commander
Eileen Collins**

Reading the short biographical piece on Col. Eileen Collins that NASA sent me, I was impressed. For one thing, she collects college degrees the way I collect CDs. And these degrees are in pretty challenging subjects: mathematics, science, economics, operations research, and space systems management. She's a trained pilot and a pilot trainer, and she also was an associate professor of mathematics. Then there's the small matter of being the first woman to pilot, and then command, a NASA Space Shuttle. Here's what she had to say about her career as a Federal employee so far.

Question: What are your feelings about Federal employment overall?

Answer: I have worked for the military or NASA for the last 21 years of my life. I have been given tremendous opportunities for jobs, for leadership, and for being on the leading edge of technology in what I'm doing day to day. I have had opportunities to travel, to work with people, and exciting challenging jobs. I wouldn't change

anything. I've enjoyed going to work every day.

Question: What do you think is most important to Federal employees in their jobs?

Answer: Making people really feel that they are a part of the overall mission and their job is important. I look at the people that actually do the hands-on work on the Shuttle at Kennedy Space Center. When they see an astronaut come in, they say, "Oh, come and look at my orbiter, come and look at my tires, my engine." And, they feel like they really are a part of that orbiter. This is the reason that the orbiter is flying so safely and so reliably.

We have a very lean workforce at the Johnson and Kennedy Space Centers. One of the advantages of having such a lean workforce is that the few people who are responsible for a certain system are really responsible. Because of that, I have no problems at all flying the Shuttle and trusting my life to these people. I know a lot of them, and I know how dedicated they are to their jobs. That makes us feel good.

Question: What helped you most in your career?

Answer: The biggest help for me was just focusing and doing my current job at the time and having support from my immediate supervisor, which is something that the Air Force is focusing on. Immediate supervisors are really taking an active role in their subordinates' career directions, and I think that is working well in the Air Force.

Question: What was the biggest hindrance to your career?

Answer: Probably the biggest hindrance was the law preventing women from serving on combat aircraft and on combat ships. When I first graduated from pilot training, I





wanted to fly fighters. That was in 1979. Because of the law against women in combat, however, the Air Force obviously wasn't going to spend a lot of money training me to fly an airplane that I'd never be able to fly in combat. But, I knew that if I just did my job, and did it well, some day — probably not for me — but, some day, the law would change. And, it did, in April of 1993. I remember how happy I was because, although it was too late for me, maybe I was part of getting this law lifted. Now, a woman can choose a job where she flies combat aircraft or goes on a combat ship.

Question: Have you gone where you intended to go with your career? Is it something you chose and aimed for from an early age?

Answer: I can't give any specific moment when I decided what I wanted to do. When I was a child, there were no women astronauts and no women military pilots. But, as I grew up and started learning more, the space program started becoming more visible. My first memory was the Gemini program in the mid-1960s. Also, of course, the Vietnam War started in the late 1960s. That was when I first started to become aware that there were astronauts and there were military pilots. When the Vietnam War was over, and I was older, I started reading about the Vietnam War, and the pilots really became my heroes. As I got older, I started wondering why we didn't have women in these fields. Then, in 1976, the Air Force selected the first women to be active duty pilots. I graduated from college in 1978, the year that NASA first selected women mission specialists for the Space Shuttle program. At that point, it became a realistic goal for me, so I applied. With a great desire to join the military, I decided to join, whether I got to fly airplanes or not.

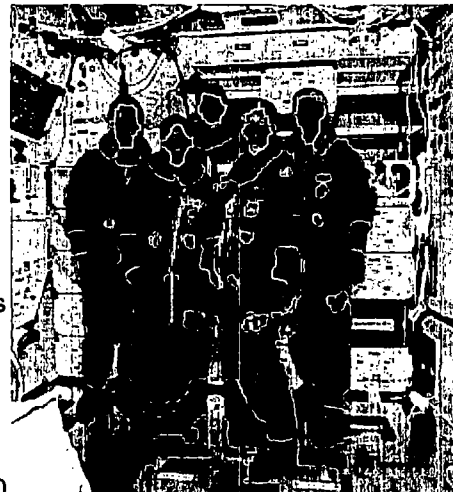
Question: What was the attraction of military service?

Answer: Well there were lots of reasons. First of all, I thought that citizens have a duty, at some point, to serve their country. I liked the thought of what military life would be like. I like organized, structured, very goal-oriented types of jobs. I like working with people; I like working with a team. As the barriers started falling for women, and for women pilots, I realized that I could join the military and become a pilot. So, I applied and was fortunate enough to get in. Soon, I started thinking about the astronaut program.

Question: Is it extremely competitive to become an astronaut?

Answer: Well, yes, it is. To be selected, you need an undergraduate college degree, although you are not competitive unless you have a Masters degree or a doctorate. You need three years of related experience in your field. Your field and your degree need to be in technical areas such as math, science, engineering, or medicine. There are also physical requirements.

We have interviews every two years. I would say we have almost 3,000 qualified applicants each time. And, I think we'd have more if more people knew about it. From the candidates who apply, we interview about 100. Picking the best qualified is a tough job. We could probably hire everyone that comes down here to interview because they usually exceed the requirements. Ultimately, about 20 - 30 of the applicants actually become astronauts.



Question: What happens after a new astronaut comes on-board? I imagine there's an ongoing learning experience, right?

Answer: Oh, yes. All new astronauts go through class together for about a year. Then, you become an astronaut. But, all those astronauts can't be assigned to a flight

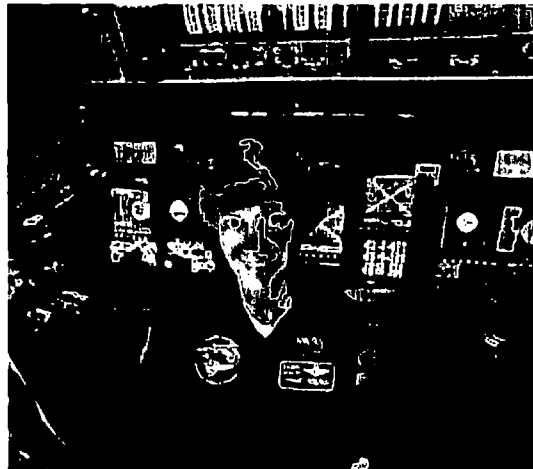
at the same time, so everyone gets a support job somewhere within the space program. It can take anywhere between one to six years to get assigned to your first flight. It was more than four years before I flew my first flight. But, when I flew my first flight, I was ready to go because those jobs were really a continuation of my training. We also do flight- readiness training with the T-38 aircraft while we're doing our other jobs. It's a very important, inexpensive way to keep the astronauts' flight proficiency up

Question: Isn't there a reinvention story around the T-38's?

Answer: Yes; that's a good point. The T-38 aircraft is a two-seat jet trainer that's been around since the late 1950s, and it's just an excellent, easily maintained aircraft, exactly what we need for training. We can also keep our costs down with this airplane because it's used by the Air Force as well as NASA, and we have common supply sources and maintenance procedures.

What's happening now is that the airplane is old, so it's getting very expensive to buy parts. Instead of going to a whole new aircraft, we upgraded our T-38s so they could use new technology. Now, it's a much safer airplane, as well as much easier to maintain.

Question: You mentioned that there's a similar process with the Space Shuttle. What's happening there?



Answer: Right. Shuttle upgrades are going on all the time. We are always looking for ways we can fly the Space Shuttle safer, better, and at a lower cost. We are always trying to keep our costs down, especially in the Shuttle program, because that frees up more money for other options in the space program. This goes all the way down to the people at my level. Astronauts who use the hardware every day think about how we can do things better and how we can be more efficient.

We could go build an entirely new space vehicle. That's been proposed. But, you've got to weigh the costs, the risks, and the amount of time in

building a whole new Space Shuttle versus taking the Space Shuttles that are proven and very reliable and just upgrading and making them better. In fact, I'm writing my post-flight crew report right now for my mission that flew last month. We're making specific recommendations on what we can do to make the Shuttle safer and better, and all those recommendations will be considered by our management. So, communication is very good.

Question: Do astronauts and other Federal employees work closely together?

Answer: We do. It really is so important that the people who eventually are going to fly on the Space Station are in there working with the engineers and the flight controllers who are designing the systems, developing them, and building them. It gives us the opportunity, from a user point of view, to suggest changes to the design up front so that when we get the Space Station up there, we don't have to change it later.

I just came back from a mission, and I got really familiar with all the people that built the telescope that we put in space. We were like a family, and now we've got this telescope up in space. And, it's doing great.



Question: Do you have any advice to give to the next generation of potential astronauts?

Answer: My advice to young people is this. Focus on three major areas: academics, activities, and your physical health. I encourage you, especially when you get into high school and you can choose some of the courses you take, to take the tough courses. Don't just avoid a course because you think you might not get an "A." Take the tough courses like math, science, and engineering. Learn a variety of things while you have the opportunity.

I also encourage young people to join in community activities, church activities, and sporting activities. It really helps teach leadership, teamwork, and communication.

Finally, I encourage young people to eat right, sleep right, and stay away from drugs and alcohol, especially if you want to be an astronaut some day. We don't have any room for people who get involved in things that are illegal, and we want people in tiptop physical shape when they come to NASA.

Question: Do you have any thoughts you'd like to share about your future?

Answer: I'm a person who likes to learn a lot of things. Maybe I'll go back to school again some day.

For more information about NASA's astronaut program, visit NASA's website, or contact Douglas Peterson, Public Affairs Specialist at the Johnson Space Center, at (281) 483-5914.

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2000](#)**Spreading Hope**

There is something in the name of the town where she was born - Hope, Arkansas - not far from the birthplace of a rising President. Their lives, like ascending grapevines, each intertwining around the name of their small town.

Making the Climb

Shirley Watkins was born to a young mother of 14 who wrapped her underweight baby in a blanket and left her in a shoebox to a childless couple. As a young person, she attended a segregated school in Arkansas and was teased for being adopted. But, Watkins recalls that, thanks to the optimistic attitude she learned from her father, "[I] had a good life...I didn't struggle. Though I started rough and rocky, I learned that you can overcome difficulty. There may be road blocks, but you can move them to get what you want and get others to achieve success...People may not understand my high energy level. I get that from my father. He didn't see things as 'can't do.'"



Today, Shirley Watkins is one of the highest-ranking women at the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and she continues to reflect the name of the town where she was born as she gives hope to so many people across the country. As Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, Shirley Watkins administers the food stamp program, the Women, Infants and Children Nutritional Health Program (WIC), and the school lunch and breakfast programs. She also commands a budget of \$40 billion. "If

this were an industry, Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) would be a top grossing firm in this nation," Under Secretary Watkins says. So, she treats it like a business, and the nation's children and poor are her customers.

All For the Children

It's clear that children are her passion. Under Secretary Watkins' face lights up when she talks about them. "When I started working in school food service in Memphis, I realized what a serious problem families were having and children



were having. I decided that I needed to work on behalf of kids to ensure that they are well nourished, that they enjoy the food, and that it was nutritious. I saw my role as the real advocate of children's health and nutrition, and I still get a great deal of joy seeing kids develop. We really do have a great role to play in the lives of kids. Whether it is helping to

get food or working on a regulation for better service or expanding a program to increase service, if kids get the right start, they can avoid diabetes and coronary disease."

Shirley Watkins is proud of what she has been able to accomplish as Under Secretary. "We are now doing what we intended to do: addressing the nutrition and health needs of children. Giving kids healthy school meals, releasing the

dietary guidelines and food pyramid for kids, and offering lactose free milk to kids are all good, positive changes to the school meals program."

She gets a kick out of feedback from kids when she finds out that they really enjoyed the lunches at school - - even though it's "cool" to say that school lunches are "gross." "It is great to hear what they say about the program [when they aren't talking to their friends]!"

Under Secretary Watkins offers visitors a look at a special book in her USDA office. It is from a Creative Learning in a Unique Environment (CLUE) class project, and it contains work from kids about nutrition. And, she is really proud of that work. She shows it off like the mother of each young author. The words of one fourth-grader seem especially profound.

Hunger is a phone without any numbers,

Disabled to hear anything but a dial tone

Monotonous and never-ending...

Attempting to call for help,

Until, finally becoming disconnected.

Brad Butler, Grade 4

Partnerships for Helping Mothers and Children

If you ask Under Secretary Watkins about her greatest source of pride, she quickly moves from the subject of children to Partnership for Change, a program that works to improve life for the thousands of people living in "colonias" on the Texas-Mexico border. She describes these regions as some of the poorest in the country, characterized by makeshift housing, lack of indoor plumbing, and dirt roads. Almost all of the residents are Hispanic, many non-English speaking, with an average annual income of just over \$9,000 for a family of four. Unemployment exceeds 40 percent, and health and nutritional conditions are harsh.

The Partnership for Change Program brings together Federal, state, and university organizations in a collaborative effort to cut red tape and help these impoverished communities. So far, the Partnership has brought six new WIC clinics to the colonias' residents providing new mothers with grocery store vouchers for healthy food and ensuring that infants and young children get childhood immunizations. The six new facilities serve 7,000 Americans. "You hear of mothers who tell you that the WIC clinic has saved their babies' lives, and that is really rewarding," the Under Secretary says.



Beatrice Duarte, a public health official for the city of Laredo, Texas, adds that, "Before WIC was here, they would take their sick babies to the hospital, and people there were too busy to help them, to teach them what to do to keep their babies healthy. But, now they learn from WIC counselors what they should eat to be healthy and what they should be feeding their little ones to keep them healthy too."

While Under Secretary Watkins realizes that there is "still a great deal of work to be done in these areas," she is proud of the progress that is being made.

A Partnership for Helping Native Americans

Shirley Watkins is also proud of FNS's accomplishments in bringing fresh produce to Indian tribes on remote reservations. Historically, some tribes didn't

receive fresh produce regularly because the procurement process took so long (sometimes five months between order and receipt) that foods arrived after their shelf lives had expired. FNS learned that the Department of Defense (DOD) had tackled a similar problem and successfully developed a network to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to military bases and installations. Under Secretary Watkins seized the opportunity for an interagency partnership, and soon DOD was "working" for FNS, delivering healthful fresh produce to Indian tribes on a regular schedule.

Digging in to Help

The job of making sure that kids and families stay healthy by getting the nutrition they require is a tough one. So, Under Secretary Watkins sometimes rolls up her



sleeves and digs in her heels to help get the job done. She jokes about the time she arrived at a school on her hunger tour thinking she was going to plant one sweet potato in a symbolic gesture. When she got there, she found out the kids expected her to plant the whole row, so, she just kept on planting -- in her black suit and high heels. It's clear that Shirley Watkins takes this sweet potato planting approach to all of her work.

Advice on Federal Reinvention

Given the success Under Secretary Watkins has achieved at FNS, her advice to others is simple. "If you are trying to reinvent an agency, you first have to think positively and not be deterred by obstacles," Watkins said. "Look at things as positive. See things as an opportunity to keep on moving. I don't see things as obstacles; I see things as an opportunity to get a lot of things accomplished."

She started out slowly reinventing her agency so that people could see the need for change. Then, she tried to help them see the value that was in it for them. One of her most difficult tasks was helping her staff develop a single vision and mission. But, that process helped them understand that reinvention is not an initiative to help the infrastructure of the industry. It's change for everyone's benefit. Shirley Watkins recalls, "At the local level, it was, 'WOW!' I've never seen so much enthusiasm."

Shirley Watkins is a new breed of manager. She videotapes conferences, visits with staff, holds regular meetings with her senior leaders, and brings people into the processes that affect them. Most of all, she empowers her staff to implement any creative ideas that will help achieve their mission of improving the nation's nutritional health and ending hunger. She gives every employee a "license to improve," and since she instituted this program in February 1999, more than 400 employees have come up with new, innovative projects that are increasing productivity at FNS. She particularly recalls the words of an employee she talked to on the road. "Shirley," she said, "how excited I am—all of a sudden I can do the creative things; you don't need to be restricted by anything."

Leaving Something Behind

So, with all of this good work to her credit, what does Under Secretary Watkins want to leave as her legacy to USDA and FNS? The answer is simple. She wants to make certain that this agency is the best that it can be in providing access to its programs, serving people's needs, and reaching out to families with resources that can help them. She laughs and adds, "We are having fun here. When we stop having fun, you know it is time to go and do something else."

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NASA Helps Kids Discover Their Planet

Like an astronaut setting foot on a new world, Mikie Walker of Virginia Beach, VA, explores the mysteries of Earth during daylight hours. What makes this so unusual for a seven-year-old boy? Mikie has porphyria, a genetic disorder that causes extreme and potentially dangerous sunlight sensitivity. Exposure to sunlight can result in chronic skin inflammation, blistering, inflammation of nerves, abdominal pain, and other disturbances. For Mikie, and other children with serious light-sensitivity disorders, even a 40-watt light bulb can be dangerous. Playing outside is unthinkable -- at least it was until recently. Now, thanks to expanded partnerships among the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), industry, and non-profit organizations, advanced space technology is being applied to solving problems right here on Earth.

NASA Partners for Community Solutions

On April 19, 1998, Mikie was freed from his lonely, dark world when he became the first American child to own a modified, pint-sized "space suit" that protects him from the sun's ultraviolet rays and other light sources. NASA's Johnson Space Center (JSC) in Houston, Texas, offered the suit to Mikie through an agreement with the not-for-profit HED (hypohidrotic ectodermal dysplasia) and Related Disorders Foundation in Hampton, VA. The HED Foundation donates cooling gear and other garments to children with HED, multiple sclerosis, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, and other genetic disorders.

Mikie sports an improved version of the pair of prototype protective suits the JSC team provided in September 1997 to four-year-old Kyle and two-year-old Ryan Richards of Shotton Colliery, England. The brothers have Polymorphic Light Reaction Syndrome, another rare genetic defect that causes a serious allergy to light.

Solutions Start with Asking for Help

"An English newspaper journalist approached us...on behalf of the Richards family," said Robert Dotts, Assistant Director of Technology Transfer and Commercialization



at JSC. After discussions with the family, NASA formed a small team and "set about defining suit requirements, identifying possible materials, and testing them," continued Dotts. Based on test results, NASA engineers designed a two-layer suit and an active cooling system to keep the children comfortable inside the suits. The finished prototypes consisted of white jackets, pants, gloves, and headgear, including goggles, that protected the boys from more than 99.9 percent of the sun's ultraviolet rays.

The JSC team -- Robert Dotts and NASA engineers Dominic Del Rosso and Evelyn Orndorff, and NASA physician, Dr. Smith Johnston -- delivered the suits to the Richards family in Orlando, Florida. Without the suits, the brothers could venture outside only at night. But, looking like junior astronauts, Kyle and Ryan wore their protective suits all over Disney World, and they also viewed a Space Shuttle launch at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. Ryan went outside during daylight hours for the first time that day.

Thanks to the "expert" feedback provided by Kyle and Ryan Richards, NASA's JSC team upgraded the protective garment, and Mikie Walker's mini-space suit has improved ventilation throughout and less overheating in the head area. "The body cooling system was changed from a battery-powered liquid pump unit to a passive

phase change vest, made of material similar to refrigerator cold packs used for sports injuries. The vest is simpler, less expensive, and more durable than the original battery pump," said Robert Dotts. The new vest is easier to use for both children and their families, and, according to Dotts, the cost of the entire suit is considerably lower than the prototype.

Like Kyle and Ryan Richards in England, Mikie is enjoying his days in the sun. "Mikie's new favorite outdoor activities include playing in dirt and rolling on the lawn," his mother Angela Walker said. "He enjoys this so much that, at the end of the day, he resembles a soil-encrusted Apollo moonwalker."

"It's amazing to think that NASA astronauts having walked on the Moon means a child now can play in the sunlight," said Sarah Moody, founder and president of the HED Foundation. Dozens of children are on the foundation's waiting list for a suit like Mikie's.

No One Can Do It Alone

When NASA spins-off technology advances from the U.S. civil space program, the Agency's industrial partners can move quickly to manufacture practical applications that benefit everyone. This time, it was MicroClimate Systems, Inc., of Sanford, MI, that supplied the vest, and the Solar Protective Factory of Carmichael, CA, provided the UV protective outer garments. The DRLI Company, which supplies protective coatings for NASA astronauts' space suit helmets, supplied the clear UV-blocking coating for Mikie's ski-goggle-like face visor.

For more information about UV protective suits for children with applicable disorders, contact the HED Foundation at P.O. Box 9421, Hampton, VA 23670, telephone (757) 826-0065.

For more information about NASA's technology spin-offs and industrial partnerships, visit the [NASA Internet site](#).

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Bad Air Days

Did you know that you can breathe a little easier now thanks to new Federal government initiatives in public outreach? Consider the following:

Ozone can aggravate asthma and other breathing problems, cause headaches and nausea, and irritate eyes. Children, the elderly, people with respiratory problems, and people who exercise outdoors can be particularly vulnerable to ozone-related discomforts. But high ozone levels can even affect healthy people.

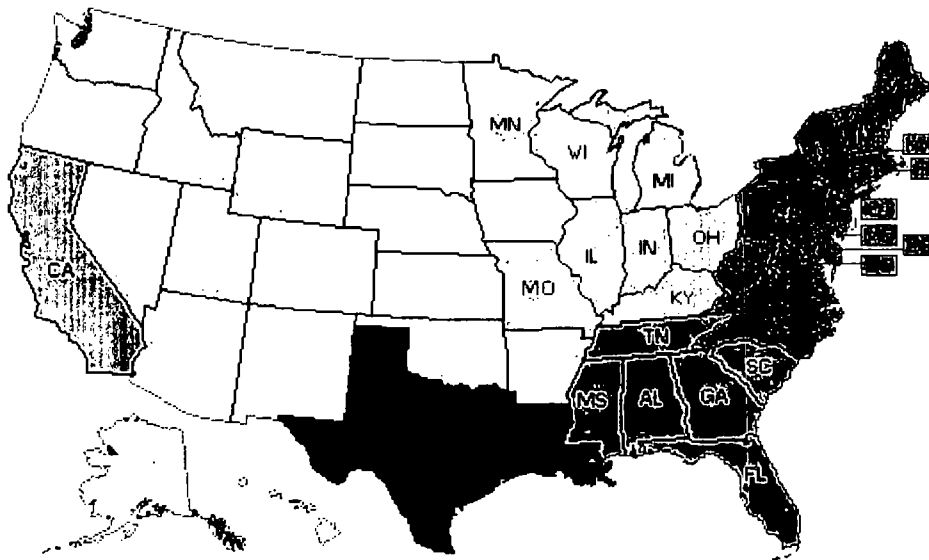
Pollutants that serve as ozone precursors are released by industrial sources and vehicles.



Harmful levels of ozone are currently declining nationwide because of pollution controls on industrial sources and new vehicles, the use of mass transit and economic incentive programs in some areas that are speeding the retirement of older, more polluting vehicles. But ozone levels still vary from place to place because of factors like weather, geography and the concentration of local pollution sources. Even in one place, ozone levels fluctuate over the course of day because of variables like wind and temperature. Of course, ozone levels usually peak everywhere around mid-day and are especially

high during the summer because sunlight is needed for ozone to form.

If you are particularly vulnerable to ozone, you need accurate, up-to-date information to help you make important decisions about your outdoor activity levels. So, how can you tell what the ozone level is likely to be in your area?

**Checking Short Term Ozone Levels**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has the answer. If you have Internet access, you can get today's ozone measurements and predictions for tomorrow's measurements at [EPA's new Internet site](#). This site provides real-time, accurate, and easy-to-understand information, including:

Maps showing current and forecasted air pollution levels in selected cities and states

Recommended health precautions (when warranted) for sensitive and non-sensitive populations, based upon the most recent scientific information

General explanations of the health effects related to air pollution

This evolving Internet site provides information about ozone. It eventually will cover all 50 states and offer tips for protecting health and reducing ground-level ozone air pollution.

You can also get information on current and predicted air pollution levels in selected cities and states on the [Weather Channel's Internet site](#)

Checking Long Term Changes

If you're looking for long term data, you can check levels of individual pollutants and their changes over time by city, county, or state by visiting the [EPA Internet site](#). This informative site is updated monthly and can answer questions, including:

What was the most common air pollutant measured in my county last month?

Have ambient air measurements increased, decreased or remained unchanged over the past five years?

Are there major sources of air pollution in my county?

For more information and real-time data on environmental topics, visit the EPA's Internet site, or call Chet Wayland, Group Leader at EPA's Information Transfer Group, at (919) 541-4603.

(For technical information or user support from EPA, call (800) 367-1044 or (800) 334-2405.)

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Fight "BAC"

If you love to nibble on raw cookie dough, eat your hamburgers really rare, or leave food sitting on the kitchen counter to cool before refrigerating it, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is targeting **you** in its new food safety education initiative.

Education Initiative is Part of Broad Food Safety Reinvention Project



Each year, thousands of serious, food-borne illnesses are treated and reported in the United States. To attack this problem, in 1996, President Clinton announced his National Food Safety Initiative. Knowing that no one Federal agency could solve the problem of food safety alone, the President directed the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to work together on improving the safety of America's food supply. By early 1997, these three cooperating

agencies were moving full-speed ahead, combining resources to develop a comprehensive program to reduce food-borne illnesses.

In October 1997, the three-agency partnership announced a major component of the National Food Safety Initiative, the Food Safety Education Program, to educate the public about safe food handling and preparation. They developed and introduced educational materials targeted to all segments of the population, including an on-line food safety quiz and useful new publications. But, one element of the new education campaign promised to be most effective: "Fight BAC," the educational program aimed at school-age children, focusing on how children themselves, and their families, can "Fight Bacteria" to stay healthy.

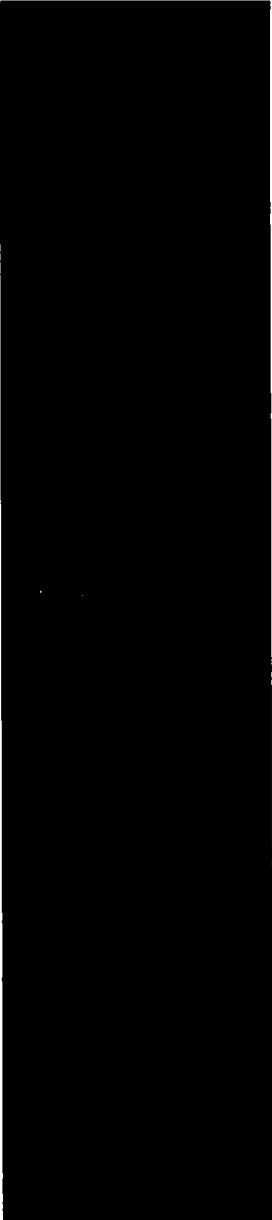
The "Fight BAC Campaign" -- A Grass-Roots Success Story

The FDA's Nashville District Office responded quickly to the education challenge and introduced several programs to promote the new food safety initiatives.

Ms. Josephine Franklin, a first grade teacher at the Westwood Elementary School in Memphis, Tennessee, was introduced to "Fight BAC" by the local Agricultural Extension Service at a workshop in June 1998. She wholeheartedly embraced the campaign and developed a "Fight BAC" unit of study to use in her class during the 1998-1999 school year. It was a rousing success! The students wrote their own stories, developed a PowerPoint presentation on food safety, and even wrote a rap song while they learned first-hand about safe food handling and preparation, as well as science-related careers.

Ms. Franklin's lessons in food safety are aimed at the whole family. Knowing the impact children can have on their parents and siblings, she urged her students to take these food safety messages home to other family members. And, it worked! One student even went home and told her parent not to eat raw cookie dough because of Salmonella.

Ms. Franklin was so impressed by what her students were able to do and learn, both inside and outside the classroom, that she easily convinced local FDA officials to observe and videotape her class on March 1, 1999. One especially delightful segment of the video shows Ms. Franklin's first-graders using "Fight BAC" materials on the Internet. Once they find the site, they happily chant the most important point of their lesson: "Clean, Separate,



Cook, Chill!" "Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill!" These (and other) songs and chants help children remember critical messages.

Ms. Franklin's students enjoyed several rewards for their great efforts - - and hers. First, they were delighted seeing themselves on the televised video. In fact, the videotape was so effective that clips from it also were used as part of a continuous loop of information about the "Fight BAC" campaign featured at a national meeting of science teachers. In addition, Ms. Franklin's class used some of the "Fight BAC" materials to win first place in the science category at the Shelby County Science Fair.

September is "back to school" month for America's kids. September 1999 also marks the fifth annual National Food Safety Education Month sponsored by the International Food Safety Council and supported by many public and private sector organizations.

To learn more about food safety, contact Sandra S. Baxter, Public Affairs Specialist, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Nashville District Office, at (615) 781-5372 [ext. 122] or visit the following Internet sites:

Food Safety
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Fight BAC

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Pig Tales

Hog farmers know what happens when the highly contagious pseudo rabies virus invades a herd. It passes almost instantaneously among animals, lowering their immunities and triggering spontaneous abortions in sows.

Before: Slow and Costly

In the past, when a veterinarian pronounced a herd contaminated, the stock was lost. As a result, affected farmers, community service contractors, and creditors suffered financially. Although the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided them with financial relief, the payment process took 30 to 45 days. Such lag-times caused financial hardships.

After: Fast and Efficient

In 1999, Fred Leuckroth of the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Minneapolis Business Service suggested that APHIS write "on-the-spot" checks to farmers for indemnity claims triggered by contaminated herds. Within two days, APHIS employees Mary Thornhill, Arlette Johnson, and Inez DeCoteau set up temporary offices near areas in Iowa and Indiana that had high contamination rates. The result; farmers, creditors, and community contractors quickly got paid via mail or personal pick-up.

It's a "win-win" situation. With the payment process ironed out, APHIS veterinarians now have more time to help farmers decontaminate and eradicate pseudo rabies from their farms, and communities stay on-track financially during contamination crises. The "on-the-spot" check payment initiative has been so successful that USDA now is considering other applications as well, like using the plan to pay crop insurance payments.

For More Information visit the [APHIS Internet site](#), or contact Denise A. Barnes at (612) 370-2147.

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Bombs Away to Inefficient Buying

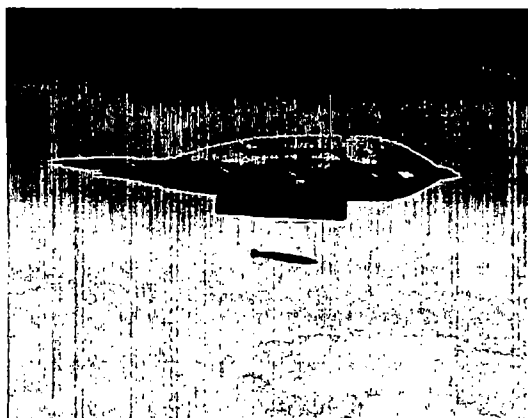
In 1991, the Department of Defense (DOD) decided to convert tens-of-thousands of stockpiled, "dumb," free-fall bombs into "smart" bombs that could be aimed



accurately at high-value targets. The question: how to do this efficiently and effectively? The answer: hire contractors to develop a kit to be attached to each bomb that would enable the bomb to follow Global Positioning System (GPS) guidance. In short, military users would control the bombs by sophisticated "remote control."

DOD Gets Smarter

To be sure, "smart bomb" technology is not entirely new, but creating all-weather "smart" bombs represented a technical tall order for DOD. The project also gave DOD the opportunity to try a "smart" performance-based procurement process (dictating the deliverable, not the process of delivery), and replace military specifications with innovative commercial practices. In addition, the Department made another "smart" choice by selecting a program manager who was determined to break cultural stereotypes and develop practices that would deliver products faster, better, and cheaper. These were tough changes for an organization that has often personified bureaucracy.

**The Benefits**

Did smart procurement, smart program management, and performance-based requirements make a difference? Indeed. These reforms helped the contractor and DOD deliver the desired result: a kit to convert a "dumb" bomb to a "smart" bomb, known as the Joint Defense Attack Munition (JDAM), that operated almost flawlessly in Kosovo. These reforms also helped DOD and the contractor reduce the costs of each JDAM kit from approximately \$36,000.00 to under \$20,000.00. These successes are now providing a roadmap for future procurement innovation in other DOD programs.

For more information, visit the [Direct Attack Munition Program Office's Website](#), or contact Roy Handsel, Joint Direct Attack Munition Program Office, at (850) 882-4261 [extension 3194].

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