

# 2010 First Quarter Meeting with Management Notes

On March 18, 2010 the KASCOE Officers met with the Kansas FSA State Executive Director Adrian Polansky, Jack Salava, Jim Parker and Aryln Stiebe. The following items are STO updates as noted by KASCOE.

## **Flexi-place Option for STO Employees**

This schedule seems to be working well for employees who are using this schedule. The Flexi-place schedule is allowing employees to see field operations in action. Currently, 3 STO employees are utilizing this option.

## **4/10 Work Schedule for STO Employees**

This work schedule was implemented on a trial basis only. The results of the trial basis concluded that the schedule didn't work well with the demands of the job. The SED has determined that at this time the 4/10 work schedule will not be available for any employees in Kansas.

## **Infant at Work Program**

This program has not been tried at this point. All FSA employees are invited to provide feedback on this program. At present there are a couple of counties interested in utilizing the program. The STO will need to submit the plan to FSA legal counsel for an opinion.

## **Hiring Retired Employees**

This program is available to FSA. All positions must be approved by the Secretary's Office prior to filling any position. Kansas employees are asked where they think this provision may apply. Vacancy announcements would not have to be done for these positions; however, there are a limited number of positions throughout the US.

## **Staffing**

At present on the CO side the STO has funding for 451 (our present ceiling) and it is likely that the STO will have funding for three additional positions. The STO has asked for 8 non-ceiling COT positions- it appears they will only get 1 position. COF's are advised that if they need temporary help at this time there is funding to hire additional temps. Currently, there are about 20 temps on board in the state. (Note: later after this meeting WDC did allow the STO to hire 4 non-ceiling COTs)

## **Training**

The STO believes that they have enough funding to provide a retirement training this year for employees within 5 years of retirement and new employees. Due to financial constraints this training will only be offered to those who will benefit the most.

## **Trainees**

At present there are 3 FLOTS and 2 COTS in the training program. Recently the STO has adopted a new COT training manual. This manual was offered as a resource tool by WDC.

## **SharePoint**

The communication team is working on a training guide for SharePoint at this time. The training guide/proposal will go to the SED very soon for final approval.

## **Linc-Pass Update**

Employees must now go to permanent enrollment stations to get their Linc-Pass. Temporary employees will not need Linc-Pass cards at this time. Any employees who have lost their Linc-Pass cards must immediately contact their HR representative. New cards with a red line across the bottom may be issued for emergency responders (it is likely this will be all CED's).

## **GSA Cars**

The STO is monitoring the use of GSA cars. If vehicles are not being utilized, they will need to be turned back in to save money. The STO pays monthly rent plus a mileage fee.

## **Budget**

Average Kansas FSA staff year benefits in dollars are as follows:

- \$85,257 GS Employee
- \$69,913 CO Employee
- \$28,583 CO Temporary

Predicted expenses for this year are:

- \$5.8 Million COF Rent & Utilities
- \$200,000 STO Rent and Utilities

Relocation expenses will not be available for any employees this year. There will be an upcoming notice on performance awards. There is money for awards based on 2009 performance reviews. Award amounts are: \$270,000 CO and \$61,000 for CO. Decisions will be made by the STO on how to split up the money.

## **New Time and Attendance**

Web-TA is scheduled to go live during pay-period 9. There will not be any FY 2010 workload from Web-TA that will be valid. All employees will need to take Web-TA training on Ag-Learn that is about 20-25 minutes in length. This will automatically be added to everyone's learning plans. A notice will be released in the future announcing a deadline for the training.

## **FLP Updates**

Kansas is in good shape on delinquency rates. There are 3 FLP trainings scheduled: PT Phase II Training, Basic Appraisal Training and environmental training. The state environmental guide will be re-done and released next month. The new Pigford lawsuit is only for people who applied but missed the 5 year deadline.

## **ITS**

In the future only 25 service centers will have servers- the remaining offices will have no servers. This is due to domain controllers. ITS is researching Econo-Mode settings for HP black and white printers and notes on how to navigate Office 2007. Some courses are available in Ag-

Learn for Microsoft 2007. ITS will release any findings in future group notes.

## **KASCOE Topics Submitted For Discussion**

The items listed below were submitted by KASCOE officers for discussion at the meeting with the STO. These discussion items were submitted by KASCOE members and reviewed by the KASCOE board of directors prior to submission. Responses from administration officials are in blue.

### **Item #1**

First, let me tell you that I have no interest in seeking a position on the MIDAS task force regardless of where it is located. The sole purpose of my suggestion is that I support of the MIDAS project and would like it to be successful.

I believe that the level of success attained will depend largely on the qualification level of the personnel selected for the task force. I believe that field office experience is critical, thus it is my opinion that the task force should be located in the finance center in Kansas City. Locating the task force in KCMO would:

- 1) allow the task force members access to all FSA computer systems;
- 2) allow task force members access to IT system experts;
- 3) enhance the chances of getting highly qualified field office personnel on the task force;
- 4) reduce the cost of the project due to a lower cost of living pay adjustment in KCMO;

Personnel from WDC can oversee the task force via video conference or travel to KC.

WDC positions are often filled by East Coast residents or individuals seeking to increase their high three who may not be the best qualified individuals working for the agency. Furthermore, we need to bring some Midwest field office experience to the MIDAS project and move some National Office activities out of WDC in an effort to enhance diversify of ideas. [Response: Good idea, however the decision has already been made to have the positions based out of WDC. The nature of the positions requires that they are in WDC.](#)

### **Item #2**

We are interested in an update on the status of the 4/10 work schedule, alternate worksite schedule and the infants in the workplace proposal that has been discussed by the SED previously. [Response: The 4/10 work schedule will not be offered at this time. The STO did run a trial on this work schedule did not work out very well.](#)

### **Item #3**

Some of our computer applications are still slow. This problem seems to have gotten considerably worse since Office 2007 was installed. [Response: This is a possibility. There were a number of updates that were installed at the same time as office 2007 which could also be causing the slow performance. It would be difficult to say which update may be causing the slow performance.](#)

### **Item #4**

There are some concerns about the statewide newsletter that was released advertizing the new CCC 927 and CCC 928 forms. The newsletter seemed to cause quite a bit of confusion amongst producers receiving the newsletter. Possibly a discussion could take place on how best to release this type of information in the future. [Response: This and any other suggestion will be considered in the future. The STO would like to see more local newsletters published.](#)

**Item #5**

What is the status of the COTs in Kansas at this time? What are the possibilities of hiring more non-ceiling COTs? This seems to be one area where the agency cannot get behind. **Response:** The STO has asked for 8 non-ceiling COT positions- it appears they will only get 1 position.

**Item #6**

Many members are interested in knowing if there will be any retirement training offered soon. With large amounts of employee retirements on the horizon there is great concern about adequate preparation for retirement. **Response:** The STO believes that they have enough funding to provide a retirement training this year for employees within 5 years of retirement and new employees. Due to financial constraints this training will only be offered to those who will benefit the most.