

The 34rd Annual  
Federal Civil Servant of the  
Year Awards Program  
**The Best In the Business**

Federal Employees of the Year



**Federal Executive Board  
Minnesota**

May 6, 2011

The 34<sup>th</sup> Annual  
*Civil Servant of the Year Awards Program*

***The Best In The Business***

**Federal Employees  
of the Year**

**2011**

***Awards***

*Printing Courtesy of  
Veterans Affairs Regional Office*





# The Federal Executive Board

## Minnesota

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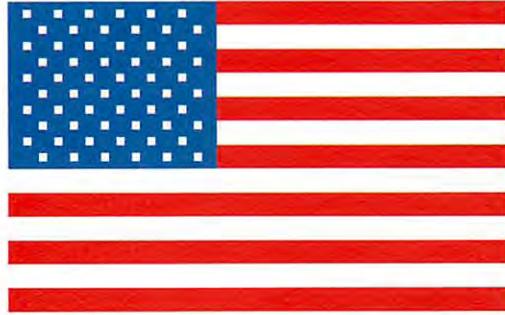
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Nancy Libersky  
Small Business Administration

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Federal Bureau of Investigation

Sharon Lubinski  
US Marshal's Service, District of Minnesota



# Federal Employees of the Year Awards Program

*This program honors outstanding Minnesota Federal employees who have demonstrated exceptional performance and dedication as a public servant during Fiscal Year 2010. It also honors Federal employees who have rendered voluntary time and service to the community in which they live.*

*We should all be proud of the many contributions to American society that the following individuals have performed in service to the Citizens of the United States of America.*



**Federal Executive Board  
Minnesota**

presents the

**2011  
FINALISTS**

for the  
**Federal Employees of the Year  
Awards**





## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



Department of Agriculture

### Gerald Ochocki

Research Technician  
Agricultural Research Service, St. Paul, Minnesota



Gerald Ochocki has been a technician for the Cereal Disease Lab for over 20 years. Not considered part of his primary duties, he has taken the initiative to learn operations of lab equipment and infrastructure. His knowledge and experience have saved time and costs in maintenance and repairs and are considered valuable assets to the Unit. All this is done in addition to his excellence as a research technician assisting in the oat crown rust research. His contributions to the oat crown rust race survey and the discovery of new resistance to this devastating disease have provided data to the oat improvement community in North America, leading to improved, disease resistant varieties. Jerry's hard work, dedication, and loyalty are exemplary and worthy of recognition.

### Steve Van Kempen

Research Technician  
Agricultural Research Service, NCSCRL



Steve has been a dedicated employee of USDA-ARS for 35 years. Last year Steve volunteered as a mentor for a high school senior interested in a science career. Steve's contributions to his community include: Lion's Club member, helping the elderly, delivering meals to shut-ins, and preparing Christmas Day meals for the needy. He participates in motorcycle runs raising money for scholarships and Hospice, and spends time with Hospice patients. Steve and his family served as a foster family for many years. Steve donates 2 to 3 weeks of leave each year driving a youth group to destinations for service work including two trips to New Orleans. His laudable efforts enhance our community.

### Matthew Cron

IT Specialist  
Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service



Matthew Cron is an exemplary employee. He has become fully proficient in his job in a very short amount of time. He has developed a keen understanding of our environment. He is continually looking for better ways to serve his customers and is always pursuing improvements in business processes. Matthew consistently receives glowing feedback from his customers. He is always willing to "go the extra mile" whether it is for another team member or a customer. He can be depended on to always meet each challenge with a positive, enthusiastic attitude. Matthew is always prepared to volunteer for extra duties, whether they're with our local team or on multi-site project teams.

### Leigh Eberhart

Contract Specialist  
Animal & Plant Health Inspection Specialist



Leigh has taken Secretary Vilsack's *Feds, Farmers and Friends Feed Families* initiative to heart by volunteering through his local church to help the Second Harvest Heartland food bank. In June 2010 he accepted one of the management positions for the Friday evening distribution night as grocery cart manager with 2 teams to load and transport each client's collected goods and help move them to their cars in the parking lot. His teams consist of 22-24 cart volunteers. He is also responsible for coordinating, picking up and returning grocery carts from the local businesses. Their food distribution average poundage is between 33,000 and 43,000 pounds of food. They have over 120 volunteers involved with set up, distribution, breakdown and cleanup for each night. In addition, Leigh also has been a blood donor over the past 25 years, donating whenever possible, especially during times of shortages.

## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



### Jodie Zurn

Facilities Service Technician  
Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service

Jodie exemplifies the very best attributes of civil service: superior customer focus, resourcefulness, stewardship, a bias for action, and a community-minded spirit. In 2010, Jodie facilitated business site operations by managing more than 100 workstation moves, arranging over 2,400 conference services events, overseeing the distribution of \$260,000 in mass transit benefits for 180 employees, and acting as the local CFC coordinator. Jodie's commitment to excellence is evident everyday through her creativity in resolving a myriad of facility issues, offering enthusiastic assistance, dependability, and enhancing the business site environment through her infectious team spirit. Jodie's extraordinary efforts help to facilitate our ability to carry out APHIS' diverse missions.



### Jeanne Horn

Human Resources Assistant  
Food Safety Inspection Service

Ms. Jeanne Horn has served the employees and customers of FSIS in an exceptional manner. She consistently provided exemplary assistance to the Agency's mission by developing new procedures/processes that contributed to a more efficient way of doing business. Her methods, process, and work products have served as an example to internal and external customers by delivering detailed presentations and one-on-one training during program transitions and providing job shadowing opportunities to participants in the *Step-up-to-Success* program. Jeanne consistently goes above and beyond to function as a team member who provides back-up support for other team members in all aspects of staffing.



### Jaci Betcher

Single Family Housing Guaranteed Specialist  
Rural Development

Jaci Betcher clearly demonstrates top Civil Servant qualities in her a strong desire to assist agency customers and willingness to take extra steps to meet their needs. She leads others with her strong convictions and work ethics while displaying compassion and patience with both her co-workers and the public. Her efforts have resulted in over a thousand families realizing their dream to become homeowners over the past three years. She actively helps with extended family needs, including weekly assistance to her parents. Jaci is also involved in organizing Susan B. Koman Cancer activities and was responsible for Rural Development's food drive for Second Harvest Heartland food shelf.

Department of Agriculture



## Civil Servant of the Year Awards

Department of Agriculture



**Kathleen Luepke**  
Area Specialist  
Rural Development



Kathy started her career at Rural Development as an Office Assistant in 1999 and has since gone through many job transformations and career enhancements within the agency. Through Kathy's determination, she has created opportunities for herself. Along with being a valuable team member within our Agency, Kathy has been very involved with both the Minnesota Association of Credit Specialists as well as the National Association of Credit Specialists. Kathy has been past President of the State Association and has served as national treasurer of the National Association the past 2 years. Kathy's work with the association has allowed her to contribute in making very positive changes in Agency program policy and regulations in an exceptional manner.

**Peter Cooper**  
Hydraulic Engineer  
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service



Peter Cooper is highly respected by everyone he works with for his technical skills, his ability to communicate effectively, and his capacity to produce high quality analysis and reports in a timely manner. Pete has been instrumental in solving flooding problems for small communities, assisting Tribes with water management issues, and providing support to broad water quality improvement projects. He is always willing to go the extra mile and do whatever he can to assist the communities and sponsors he works with. Pete Cooper is the type of person who makes you proud to be a Federal Employee.

**Dave Copeland**  
District Conservationist  
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service



Dave is a valued employee that does a great job of leading and managing the NRCS operations in Olmsted County. Mr. Copeland continues to assist flood victims with erosion problems resulting from 2 Presidential Declared Disaster events in 2007 and 2008 by providing both financial and engineering assistance on farms near these major storm events. Dave was a team leader expanding the USDA People's Garden at the Rochester USDA Ag Service Center utilizing a local Cub Scout pack to help plant and harvest more than 350 lbs. of fresh produce that was provided to local food shelves in 2010. In addition, Dave works well in bringing USDA conservation programs to clients with disabilities to include the local Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch and is looked upon by local farmers as the expert in addressing erosion and water quality issues across the landscape of Olmsted County. Dave is a devoted father and is active in the community as a Rochester Youth Baseball Association coach, member of the Rochester Area Crop Walk committee which raises funds for the local food shelf, and is an active member of his local church.

# Civil Servant of the Year Awards



## Michael A. Gregory

Territory Manager, Field Specialist-Engineering  
Internal Revenue Service

Mike annually uses a week of personal vacation time to volunteer as a counselor for junior high boys at a camp in Northern Minnesota. He is professionally trained in mediation and arbitration and volunteers with the Dispute Resolution Center and with Conflict Resolution Minnesota. He volunteers with Minnesota Without Poverty and speaks at various functions to raise awareness of this issue. As an active member of his church, he provides assistance to his fellow parishioners with home repair, maintenance, and remodeling. Mike is also an effective liaison between the IRS and its external stakeholders in the valuation community. He has given several presentations to associations/societies, including the American Society of Appraisers and the National Association of Certified Valuation Analysts.



## Julie Stevenson

Field Assistance Group Manager, Taxpayer  
Assistance, Internal Revenue Service

As an employee of the IRS, Julie is highly respected and appreciated. She has taught extensively across the country on tax law and taxpayer accounts, has written course material on numerous subjects, and has planned CPEs for her territory. When she is in the office, her door is always open for help. In personnel and work matters, she consistently ensures all issues are answered and she is a manager you can trust to be fair to each employee. Each year, Julie receives high marks in the employee satisfaction survey. Julie is active outside the IRS, as well. For years she has cooked and planned meals at Loaves and Fishes, served on various committees, held various church offices, and is in the hand bell choir at her church.



## Susan Iverson-Rivers

Assistant Director  
Minneapolis Passport Agency

Suzie has inspired her subordinates and helped the agency build a positive reputation in the federal community and, more important, in the public's eye. Suzie has mentored and developed agency employees; modeled excellent leadership and customer service skills; and conducted effective public outreach in the media and in person. Working with hundreds of passport acceptance agents throughout Minnesota, Suzie has conducted engaging and effective training to ensure compliance with passport regulations. She has handled many after-hours emergency applications, helping Minnesotans get passports on short notice. She has also worked closely with Minnesota congressional district offices on behalf of their constituents to help citizens get passports. Suzie has truly made a difference by serving the community.



## Nancy Chrisfield

Senior Operations Officer  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

Nancy is an outstanding employee of ATF who consistently upholds the highest standards of professionalism. Her position requires her to work as a coordinator and liaison within all levels of the agency from the local field offices to our Headquarters, as well as with other law enforcement agencies. This position can be difficult, but she always conducts herself in the most professional and courteous manner. In addition, Nancy works with members of the public who have come in contact with ATF. She is not only professional, but a joy to work with and makes the work environment much more pleasant.

Departments of The Treasury | State | Justice



## Civil Servant of the Year Awards

Department of Defense



### Patricia Boettner

Comptroller  
Department of the Air Force - 934<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing



Ms. Boettner is a talented comptroller. As a direct result of her professional skill and ability, the 934th Airlift Wing achieved a 99.9% operations and maintenance obligation rate for fiscal year 2010. She continuously excels in resource utilization. Through Patty's exceptional management of the Unfunded Request program, an additional 1.6 million dollars of funding was received, enhancing the wing's ability to meet increasing operational demands. Additionally, she coordinated with the wing's Yellow Ribbon program to plan three pre/post deployment events. Patty's sound financial guidance ensured that over 300 deployed military personnel and family members received essential reintegration services. Patty's leadership of the wing's financial management division is remarkable. There were zero discrepancies identified in her programs during the wing's 2010 Unit Compliance Inspection.

### Joseph Bystedt

Fabrications Flight Chief  
Department of the Air Force - 934<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing



Mr. Bystedt has been instrumental in the success of the 934th Airlift Wing. As Fabrication Flight Chief, he was appointed Maintenance Squadron point of contact for 75 checklists during the 2010 Logistics Compliance Inspection Program inspection. He spent numerous hours coordinating with 14 different maintenance shops completing these checklists. Joe's dedicated efforts directly contributed to the squadron successfully passing this difficult inspection with an "Excellent" rating. Joe brought back to life the aircraft refurbishment program and formed a "scoring team" to evaluate the fleet. He volunteered to develop and implement the Controlled Area program, training 198 personnel on proper management in the maintenance complex ensuring area security. Joe implemented the forklift training program coordinating efforts with a contractor to get maintenance personnel fully qualified.

### Amanda Kvamme

Training Technician  
Department of the Air Force - 934<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing



Ms. Kvamme performed brilliantly as the Maintenance Squadron's Training Technician. She developed a website housing training products and forms that all group members must have access to. Amanda aggressively monitored the Management Information System for over 280 members reducing overdue and erroneous data by 60%. She developed, implemented and maintains a quick reference list of new Expeditionary Skills Proficiency Training for wing deployments eliminating the "what" and "when" confusion of 18 mandatory requirements. She spearheaded the Career Development Course pretest program reducing first time failures by over 90%. Amanda went above and beyond in her efforts as the person in charge of planning the 2010 Military Ball, spending over 100 hours planning and managing the \$22,000.00 budget making the event a huge success!

## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



### **Ryan Ricci**

**Weapons Safety Manager  
Department of the Air Force - 934<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing**

Mr. Ricci sets the standard for the safety profession. He authored two operating instructions for exercises involving munitions and Aerial Port explosives. Both documents were adopted for department wide implementation by the United States Air Force Reserve. Efficiently optimizing all available resources, he coordinated the resolution of a major discrepancy in the base Weapons Lighting Protection Systems. As a direct result of Ryan's unyielding commitment to safety, this potentially life threatening hazard was eliminated, protecting the four employees assigned to the area and preserving more than 1.2 million dollars in Air Force assets. Ryan's administrative management of the wing's Weapons Program is exceptional and was recently benchmarked by higher headquarters as the standard of practice.



### **James H. Sharpsteen**

**Contract Administrator  
Defense Contract Management Agency - Twin Cities**

James has contributed immensely to the local community and his DCMA colleagues through his dedicated commitment to improve the morale, educational, and developmental opportunities for his fellow citizens. Jim administers over 400 DoD contracts worth over \$400 million, and is a highly motivated individual with a positive attitude and unyielding commitment to outstanding customer service. With his knowledge, skills and willingness to give of himself, Jim readily volunteers, teaches, coaches, and mentors. Jim is an active Toastmasters Club member, guest speaker for FEB, and serves on the Board of Directors for NCMA's Twin Cities Chapter. During his spare time, Jim teaches Sunday school at his church. DCMA proudly recognizes Jim as an exceptional Civil Servant.



### **Adam M. Wilson**

**Administrative Contracting Officer  
Defense Contract Management Agency - Twin Cities**

Adam is a high impact leader who superbly represents the Defense Contract Management Agency as the leader of an Administrative Contracting Officer team. Under his leadership, he has cultivated the model teaming environment which has been recognized by fellow DCMA teams and colleagues. His team manages over 1200 contracts and hundreds of defense contractors at a total contract value exceeding \$600M. Moreover, DCMA Twin Cities' contracting interns are motivated, focused, and results driven due to his exceptional management of their program. Adam also expertly assisted another team in improving their contract closeout metrics and proactively negotiated the closure of dozens of contracts resulting in a 67% reduction in closeout backlog.

*Department of Defense*



## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



Department of Defense

### **William Csajko**

**Project Manager (Civil Engineer)  
Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District**



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers.**

In May 2010, Vice President Biden asked the Administration to convene a Task Force to examine Federal activities in and around Devils Lake, ND, and produce a report in 90 days. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) delegated the responsibility of producing the report to the Corps of Engineers. Mr. Csajko accepted the assignment. The process involved multiple agencies and listening sessions. Mr. Csajko produced a superb consolidated report, which was nothing short of spectacular. At all times Mr. Csajko was calmly responsive to the multiple challenges in an effort having significant political and international interest. As stated by OMB, "The Assistant Secretary of the Army ... and the Executive Office of the President all greatly appreciate his efforts..."

### **Craig Evans**

**Chief, Plan Formulation & Economics Branch  
Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District**



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers.**

Craig is a professional, superior mentor, team leader, and dedicated employee. These traits are reflected daily through his teaching employees how to be successful at work and at home. Craig is a superior planner, and led the Fargo-Moorhead team through the complicated planning process. He can present technical information to members of the public and is able to interact with them during difficult situations. Craig participates in many community organizations, including church band, Boy Scouts, and Roseville High School plays. He devotes many hours to volunteering and working with kids, while teaching valuable life lessons. Craig is a true role model in and outside of work. He always gives more than 100 percent to ensure the success of others, while treating everyone with respect.

### **Roy Lawson**

**Construction Representatives  
Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District**



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers.**

Roy is an exceptional employee who generously gives of his time and experience, on and off the job. This year, Roy mentored an inexperienced contractor through the management and quality control processes, saving time and money for the Government and the Contractor. Roy is a patriot who continues to serve his nation and his community. In the past, he has deployed to Iraq for reconstruction and to New Orleans for hurricane recovery. This last year, Roy was the Corps representative in Oslo, Minnesota, overseeing the construction of emergency levees and railroad closures during the 2010 flood. He has assisted friends with their harvest and is a member of the VFW and American Legion, operating community outreach activities at the Pennington County Fair.



## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



### **James Espelien**

**Budget Analyst  
Minnesota Army National Guard**

James Espelien is a Budget Analyst and a leader of change. He has been instrumental in leading the largest change in accounting and financial management for the logistics community by providing sound recommendations for the implementation of the General Fund Enterprise Business System (GFEBS). His financial advice led to the successful deployment of an exportable combat training center (xCTC) supporting two Brigade Combat Teams as they each prepared over 2,400 soldiers for deployment. His professionalism in building collaborative partnerships enabled the Minnesota Army National Guard, the Department of Military Affairs and the USPFO-MN to enter into an agreed upon basis for cost reimbursement for surface equipment used to support SAD or EMAC missions, reducing the cost both in dollars and staff time.



### **Amy Dee Monson**

**Family Programs, Deployment Cycle Support  
Minnesota Army National Guard**

Amy Monson never misses an opportunity to create awareness and foster connections between Servicemembers, families and communities. Examples of her volunteerism include: supporting three Operation Military Kids camps, coordinating the donation of 150 computers from Operation Homelink to be given to families of Servicemembers who are being deployed, teaching a Military 101 class to youth at reintegration events, speaking to a book club and a church group, and by meeting with a Waconia, MN Girl Scout troop to brainstorm ideas that would help them create a proposal they could submit to their council to earn their Silver Award. By doing these things, Amy provides youth, families, and communities opportunities to maintain a healthy bond with their Servicemembers, making a difference today, and in the future.



### **Jackie Stenger**

**Family Programs Director  
Minnesota Army National Guard**

Jackie Stenger's dedication to Servicemembers and families goes "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon." As the Family Programs Director her ground breaking initiatives reached out to more than 11,000 Army National Guard members and their families by providing resources and assistance throughout the deployment cycle. She provided training to an all volunteer Family Readiness support network that provided assistance and training to families of deployed Soldiers. She supervised 11 Family Assistance Centers across the state that provided \$176,000 in grants for families in crisis. Her Youth Programs initiatives provided a voice for Teens by developing a Teen Panel and Conference to help teens cope with the challenges of deployment and volunteered to help children of fallen Servicemembers at the annual Gold Star retreat. Her dedication is without peer.

*Department of Defense*



## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



Department of Defense

### John Sorenson

Training Manager  
Minnesota Air National Guard - 148th Fighter Wing



John Sorensen is very active in the Boy Scout program. He serves as an Assistant Scoutmaster. He has mentored five individuals into achieving the ultimate Scouting achievement of Eagle Scout. John also delivers Thanksgiving meals to people in our community that would otherwise not enjoy that luxury. He enlists the help of his family to help them realize the importance of helping others who cannot help themselves. John participates with the Salvation Army Gift Box program that provides a dinner as well as Christmas gifts to underprivileged community families with young children. John does truly live the Air Force core value of "Service before Self". We are proud to have him as a member of the 148<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, Minnesota Air National Guard.

### Thomas Erickson, Jr

Port Security Specialist  
U.S. Coast Guard



As an integral part of the Western Lake Superior Area Maritime Security Committee, Mr. Tom Erickson manages the unit Maritime Security Risk Assessment Model, a terrorism risk analysis tool used by Federal Maritime Security Coordinators and their stakeholders to support a vast array of risk management decisions. In this capacity he conducted dozens of threat and vulnerability assessments to critical infrastructure. In addition, he administers the unit's Americas Waterways Watch Program and is liaison to the Coast Guard Auxiliary, an all volunteer force providing boating safety to the general public. Moreover, he manages a proprietary data base designed to assist Coast Guard Commanders with Marine Transportation System recovery and minimize economic impact following a large scale incident. Mr. Erickson was handpicked to represent the Coast Guard at the Integrated Border Enforcement Team, the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Twin Ports Human Trafficking Workgroup.

### Charles Harvin

Yeoman First Class  
U.S. Navy



Petty Officer Harvin is a Sailor's Sailor. His contribution and commitment to Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC) Minneapolis' mission accomplishment is astounding. Without a doubt, he is the "go to" person on the NOSC staff for all administrative functions. His devotion and commitment have been the backbone of the Administrative Department and have been felt throughout the command. Whether it is career counseling, personnel security issues, legal matters, or general administrative requirements, everyone from the most junior Seamen to senior Captains seek his guidance. Not only is he an outstanding role model for our Administrative Department, his peers throughout the command seek his leadership and mentoring. He is genuinely deserving of the recognition afforded by his selection as 2010 Minnesota Civil Servant of the Year.

# Civil Servant of the Year Awards



## Kevin Waldron

Logistics Specialist First Class  
U.S. Navy

Petty Officer Waldron is an outstanding Sailor, whose expertise was vital in developing his Reserve unit's Emergency Operations Center qualifications. He was also responsible for the scheduling and tracking of all unit training requirements. He has honorably served on the Spring Lake Park-Blaine-Mounds View (SBM) Fire Dept. where he is assigned to Station 3 and responds to at least 30% of all calls. Using the knowledge from his firehouse support, Petty Officer Waldron provides Safety training to schools and senior centers and provides fire truck and station tours for the community. Petty Officer Waldron is a superior Navy leader, pillar in the community and proven professional who is genuinely deserving of the recognition afforded by his selection as 2010 Minnesota Civil Servant of the Year.



## Robert Malewicki

Logistics Specialist First Class  
U.S. Navy

Robert Malewicki's performance as the University of Minnesota NROTC Supply Technician has been outstanding. He expertly managed state and federal budgets totaling \$1.5M and completed FY10 with a 99.9% obligation rate. He completed ADP, Uniform, Minor Property and Instructional inventories with 100% accuracy and accountability. In addition, he was responsible for the collection, shipping and tracking of results for urinalysis samples in accordance with current guidance and policy. This included the required training of personnel and was carried out with 100% accountability and zero discrepancies. An active member of the American Legion and VFW, he participated in numerous events in support of his community to include speaking at grade schools on Veterans Day. He also coached youth baseball, positively impacting Minnesota's young men and women.



## Luann Bartuah

Support Services Specialist  
Housing & Urban Development

For the past six years Luann has demonstrated superior competence, excellent management skills, attention to detail and compassion in directing and assisting 80 employees with a variety of backgrounds, skills and needs. Employees soon learn that she is the 1<sup>st</sup> point of contact for any HUD question. Her responses are immediate and thorough. She not only delivers information, but is always willing to assist an employee whether it is in designing and delivering a power point or correcting a time and attendance entry. Above all, Luann is a positive person, respected and appreciated by all of the HUD staff.

Departments of Defense | HUD



## Civil Servant of the Year Awards

*Department of the Interior*



**Judith Abelson**  
Legal Administrative Specialist (Probate)  
Bureau of Indian Affairs



Judy Abelson was named the Great Lakes Agency Employee of the Year for 2010. This past year she has performed her job which provides administrative support in the preparation of probate cases to be submitted to the Administrative Law Judge and the timely distribution of trust assets to Indian beneficiaries. Ms. Abelson's work in 2010 was of significant importance as she provided intricate technical guidance in the completion of an agency wide "high priority" project. In addition to her regular workload and working on the project herself, she significantly contributed to the success of the project for the agency by providing technical guidance and training to 31 agency staff in performance of this specialized work. This reflected well as the agency met their target goals and in addition supported workforce planning efforts by providing employee development opportunities for agency staff.

**Richard Berg**  
Regional Archeologist  
Bureau of Indian Affairs



During the summer of FY 2010, Richard Berg, the Midwest Regional Archaeologist, contributed to the BIA by volunteering to assist the Great Plains Regional Office. The Great Plains was without an Archaeologist and, as a result, numerous critical and time sensitive projects were not being completed. Prior to his detail, Rich went above and beyond his duty by managing the Midwest Region cultural workload to allow his absence for the summer. Rich's initiative and superior work in the Great Plains allowed many of the regional branches to move projects forward while having no adverse impact to the Midwest Region. Rich demonstrated his leadership and commitment to the Agency Mission by volunteering his time to the Great Plains Region.

**Tony Saccoman**  
Supervisory Highway Engineer  
Bureau of Indian Affairs



Tony is a supervisor that believes in leading by example. His devotion to the Indian Reservation Roads Program and the tribes that we serve is demonstrated on a daily basis by his hard work and selflessness. His administrative philosophy revolves around his belief in providing timely responses to clients and co-workers. He has devoted his career to looking "outside of the proverbial bureaucratic box". He does not believe in "Red Tape", and is continually working with other programs to develop methods that will streamline procedures and make the IRR Program more efficient. His contributions were never more evident than this past year. Tony's dedication and leadership were primary reasons why tribes were so successful in obtaining and obligating substantial ARRA funding.

## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



### Amy McGovern

Liaison to Environmental Protection Agency  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

In her position as the Fish & Wildlife Service liaison to the Environmental Protection Agency in Chicago, Amy served as the Service's staff lead for implementing the Service's \$65 million portion of the Administration's \$475 million Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Amy coordinated with Service and EPA managers and staff of almost 20 programs to plan, implement, and track GLRI projects and to attend to myriad administrative details on short deadline requiring initiative, excellent communication, and attention to detail. As a result, the Service, working with partners, has implemented more than 130 high priority on-the-ground projects addressing aquatic invasive species, environmental contaminants, and protection and restoration of fish and wildlife and habitats. Amy's efforts to maintain the Service's high level of accountability and professionalism are greatly appreciated.



### Craig Nibbe

Environmental Engineer  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Craig has done an outstanding job in substantially reducing the number of open environmental and greening findings by assisting the Region's 150 Field Stations with a myriad of regulatory compliance issues. Open detailed regulatory findings are at an all-time low of 1.62% (lowest since program began in 1994). He has done this through on-site assistance visits in the Region's eight states, as well as by phone, e-mail and the intranet. Because of these accomplishments, Craig recently participated in a Service-wide panel in order to disseminate his successful methods.



### Sue Langer

Physical Science Technician  
U.S. Geological Survey

Sue Langer does an outstanding job maintaining the USGS National Water Information System (NWIS) database for the Minnesota Water Science Center (MWSC). This work is critical to MWSC hydrologists, as well as other Federal and State agencies. In a cheerful and timely manner, Sue ensures that the NWIS database is accurate and accessible. This year Sue took on extra duties managing the organization and shipping of water samples while continuing to fulfill her normal day-to-day responsibilities. Sue has presented results of special studies at various conferences throughout the year. She represents the USGS with integrity and maintains a positive attitude through challenging times. Sue is a strong advocate for community service and donates personal time and energy to causes that are important to her.

Department of the Interior



## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



Department of the Transportation

### Sonny Fechter

Program Operations Field Manager  
Federal Aviation Administration



Mr. Fechter leads the Minneapolis Center Field Automation Support Team responsible for all HOST/URET/ERAM Automation Adaptation. Under his guidance, they have taken a leading role in the implementation of En Route Automation Modernization (ERAM), the 40-year old HOST computer system replacement. His project contributions are comprehensive and immeasurable with impact for all 20 FAA Centers nationwide and the entire National Airspace System. In addition, he chairs the facility coordination for local stakeholders; has oversight of the Lockheed Martin contractors who program and interface with the HOST; participates on the National Adaptation Oversight Team dealing with software adaptations for all 20 Centers. Sonny is highly regarded among his peers, his employees, and nationally in the automation world for his dedication, expertise, and professionalism.

### David Sturm

Air Transportation Systems Specialist  
Federal Aviation Administration



Dave Sturm is one of many highly-valued technical operations employees at Minneapolis Center. He is responsible for equipment and systems utilized by National Airspace System extending over 300,000 square miles and 9 states. His professional expertise is put to daily use as he keeps radar and flight data processing equipment at optimal capacity. He is the go-to specialist for multiple systems. Dave assumes some challenging tasks for air traffic which are highly successful due to his commitment and drive to accomplish with minimal impact to the system he services. He is counted upon to provide solutions to complex technical problems which rely on his creativity, competence, and "can do" attitude. Dave's contributions are essential to the facility's accomplishments and recognized high level of performance.

### Jill Teetzel

Administrative Officer  
Federal Aviation Administration



Jill is a new employee at the ADO. She has stepped in to fill the position of Administrative Officer seamlessly. In addition to cheerfully and efficiently doing her normal duties, she took on the large, contentious, and thankless task of coordinating the lease renewal and space allocation for our office. This involved several meetings with other FAA lines of business that share the building, along with the building owner, Regional personnel, and contractors. Jill organized the move to our temporary location that was necessary while our permanent office is remodeled. She has done an outstanding job, and I have no doubt that the move back will be even more efficient.

# Civil Servant of the Year Awards



## Kurt Wagner

Air Traffic Control Specialist  
Federal Aviation Administration

Kurt Wagner, a 20+ year air traffic controller, deserves recognition as Civil Servant of the Year. Kurt has proven to be exceedingly competent and invaluable to the facility training program and facility morale. His commitment to accomplishing any task to the highest standards is commendable. Kurt is an outstanding instructor and serves as a positive role model to other controllers. His enthusiastic approach to training and extraordinary teaching methods has resulted in accomplishing hundreds of training hours and the successful certification of more than a dozen controllers. Outside of work, Kurt is quick to volunteer to help co-workers, even re-arranging his work schedule when necessary. Kurt, along with his wife Renee, also actively volunteers at their daughter's school.



## Arnie Yeske

Operations Manager  
Federal Aviation Administration

Arnie Yeske, an Operations Manager at the Minneapolis Air Traffic Control Tower, embodies professionalism by striving to make the Federal Aviation Administration an outstanding place to work. Arnie enthusiastically promotes safety and balances it closely with efficiency. He works tirelessly to provide not only a safe air traffic system, but one that respects the diversity of its employees; collaborates openly with customers and labor; and is committed to making positive changes for the workforce. In addition to his normal duties, Arnie also works closely with the Office of Runway Safety as a Subject Matter Expert. In addition to his professional contributions, Arnie volunteers by serving as the President on his church council and is the proud father of two girls.



## Thomas Hultquist

Science and Operations Manager  
National Weather Service

Thomas Hultquist provided exemplary leadership in furthering our science, outreach, and ultimately enhancing NOAA's NWS mission. His can do attitude and tireless efforts to engage and mentor staff while furthering our knowledge of science are outstanding. Tom's training for the staff focused on the near storm environment and smarter interrogation of storms based on research he led in past years. He seized the opportunity on several occasions in real time to reinforce these training principles. As a result, our lead time, probability of detection, and false alarm ratio improved dramatically, enhancing our agencies credibility. More importantly, the level of service provided to Minnesotans was elevated due to his efforts, especially during the record breaking tornado season of 2010.

Departments of Transportation | Commerce



## Civil Servant of the Year Awards

Department of Veterans Affairs



**Jodi Thompson**  
Supervisory Financial Administrative Specialist  
VA Debt Management Center



VA Debt Management Center is pleased to nominate Ms. Jodi Thompson as its 2010 Civil Servant of the Year. Ms. Thompson is chief of our public contact telephone section, responsible for handling an average of 10,000 inquiries, weekly. Since the initiation of a new VA education benefit in August 2009, Debt Management Center has experienced unprecedented numbers of customer contacts, many of them matters of great urgency to veterans, servicemembers and their dependents attending a variety of learning institutions. Under demanding conditions she maintains a disciplined approach to managing people and working towards the goals of the Department of Veterans Affairs. She and her staff have worked hard to maintain a quality work environment while meeting the needs of an honored segment of America – its veterans and military.

**Kevin Burns**  
Outpatient Pharmacy Outpatient Coordinator  
Minneapolis Medical Center



Kevin Burns, PharmD, is an integral part of the function of pharmacy and the care of VA patients. Dr. Burns was the key figure in ensuring patients received their needed medications in a safe, timely, and efficient manner through over 27 drug shortages in 2010. Dr. Burns helped to develop a new integrated call center, providing patients with direct access to pharmacists and technicians, which has decreased phone wait times, improved patient satisfaction and enhanced patient care. He is the director of pharmacy student education and oversees the education of over 70 students yearly. In 2010, he was named “Pharmacy Preceptor of the Year” by North Dakota State University. Dr Burns also takes great pride in his community involvement, volunteer work and his five children.

**Jackie Costabilo**  
MOVE Program Manager  
Minneapolis Medical Center



Ms. Costabilo makes a difference in the lives of Veterans who are severely overweight. She goes the extra mile – literally and figuratively – to help patients in the VA’s successful MOVE program. In 2010, the Minneapolis VA held a “5K Walk, Run & Roll.” Ms. Costabilo arranged for a shorter 2K “walk” around the hospital for her overweight clients. The event became a goal for 22 veterans. On event day, despite the rain, they all showed up. And several participated in the 5K event. The last Veteran to cross the finish line was one of her clients. He was tired but smiling. “I didn’t think I could do it,” he said. Thanks to Ms. Costabilo, he achieved his goal. . . on race day and in life!

## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



### Jonelle Draughn

Homeless Veterans Outreach Program Manager  
Minneapolis Medical Center

When the VA Secretary made “eliminating Veterans homelessness” his Number One Priority, a heavy responsibility fell on the shoulders of the Minneapolis VA homeless coordinator. Fortunately, social worker Jonelle Draughn had the ability, leadership skills and community connections to meet the challenge. Therefore, Ms. Draughn has worked tirelessly and collaboratively with two dozen local organizations (public and non-profit). In 2010, she brought them together in a “homeless veteran’s summit.” She was also faced with the need to add and train new staff. Housing vouchers are being distributed and lives are being changed. Jonelle would be the first to say that this is a “community” effort and all should be recognized. That’s the kind of person she is.



### Peggy Engman

Registered Nurse, Specialty Services  
Minneapolis Medical Center

An outstanding operative room nurse who has clearly distinguished herself as one of the best nurses with have ever had in OR. She is truly like by everyone, patients, colleagues, physicians. She is a natural leader, who leads by example and not by demand. But what is truly unique about her, is her sincere devotion to the veterans. For almost 10 years she has organized with no institutional support a bowling day fund raiser for the veterans. She reserves the bowling lanes, designs team’s shirts specific to each different department, and buys trophies and awards for the competitions. She also buys prizes for raffles, and the money she collects for the almost 80 people who participate in these events is donated not-for-profit organization for disabled veterans.



### Debra Hanson

Clinical Neurophysiology Technologist  
Minneapolis Medical Center

In 2010 Debra Hanson continues her many year history of making numerous outstanding **professional** contributions to the Neurology Service and the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. She serves as the head technologist in the Minneapolis VA Clinical Neurophysiology Laboratory which is part of the Northwest Epilepsy Center of Excellence. Deb manages a state-of-the-art EEG/EMG and Video-EEG laboratory which serves all of VISN 13. She has shown exceptional ability in troubleshooting and maintaining complex equipment. She is patient focused and organizes scheduling so that there are rarely any unused appointment slots. She volunteers to teach Medical Students the complex skill of reading EEG. She does all the above, and much more, with enthusiasm and a “ready to serve attitude” that is exemplary for all VA employees.

Department of Veterans Affairs



## Civil Servant of the Year Awards

Department of Veterans Affairs



**Steven Kirchner**  
Accounts Receivable Technician  
Minneapolis Medical Center



Due to his customer service skills I am nominating Steven Kirchner. Steven goes out of his way to assist patients with their billing problems. He has a broad knowledge of the correlation of Department of Treasury offsets, Debt Management offsets, Tricare billing, first party veteran copays and third party billing and utilizes that knowledge to solve problems daily. He explains veterans benefits, how and when to apply for a service connection and whom they should contact to apply for a service connection. He also explains how Tricare works for retired military personnel and the coordination of benefits when they are eligibility for Medicare. He takes the time to teach coworkers and to assist with difficult problems at the Customer Service desk.

**Kelly McCarthy**  
Nurse  
Minneapolis Medical Center



A nurse in the Minneapolis Chronic Hepatitis Clinic. She tirelessly provided competent, compassionate, and dedicated service to this very challenging patient population. The Chronic Hepatitis Clinic's patients have much higher rates of substance use, homelessness, unemployment, chronic pain, and mental health difficulties than do other veterans. The clinic's antiviral drugs tend to intensify the patients' underlying pain and mental health problems. She assesses them efficiently, determines which need extra or urgent attention, diffuses their anger and irritation, and utilizes the VA system effectively. She stays calm and upbeat in the face of challenging situations that would demoralize and frighten many others, maintains excellent rapport with even the most difficult patients, and function almost as a Nurse Practitioner within her area of special expertise.

**Robert Munson**  
Police Officer  
Minneapolis Medical Center



A true humanitarian while helping his fellow veterans and employees at the Minneapolis VA hospital every day he works. Sgt. Munson truly and sincerely cares and is interested in the welfare of the veterans he serves. Many veterans know Sgt. Munson by his first name and often refer to him affectionately as Sgt. Bob. Often troubled or veterans in emotional crisis come to the VA and Bob is the Police Officer they want to see. He has always been a professional mentor to all new police officers arriving at the VA. He teaches not only to enforce the rules but to care for and respect veterans and employee's first and foremost. His personality and good will are contagious to his colleagues and everyone he encounters.

## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



### **Michelle Rohde**

**Diagnostic Radiology Technologist  
Minneapolis Medical Center**

Ms. Rohde performs in an outstanding manner in all her roles in the Cardiac Cath Lab. She has exceptional skills in the complex and sophisticated technologies that are used in both the coronary and electrophysiology areas of the lab as well as excellent imaging skills. Ms. Rohde is frequently a resource to other lab staff, sharing her knowledge constructively. In addition, Ms. Rohde demonstrates a warm, kind and empathetic manner in her interactions with patients and families. She often goes out of her way to be of assistance, provide information or help out others with tasks. Ms. Rohde is a highly valued member of the Cardiology team.



### **Michael Rosecrans**

**Patient Advocate/Congressional Liaison  
Minneapolis Medical Center**

Whenever a disgruntled Veteran contacts a congressional office seeking help, the point-of-contact at the Minneapolis VA is Mike Rosecrans. He must walk a fine line that 1) protects patient privacy; 2) responds to the complaint or issue; and 3) resolves the matter. He achieves positive results because he is a skilled communicator, a Veteran himself who can speak the military language and a committed civil servant. Mike also is the medical center's emissary to service organizations, where he helps spread the word about services and programs. He is widely regarded in the veteran's community for his positive/friendly demeanor and his "get it done" attitude.



### **Kathy West**

**Medical Foster Home Coordinator  
Minneapolis Medical Center**

An exceptional leader in the Home and Community Care department and the Minneapolis VA HCS. She has developed exceptional community relationships with the goal of building bridges between the VA Health Care System and the community. She has developed a successful medical foster home program that has supported the psychosocial wellbeing of veterans that would otherwise be institutionalized. Always encouraging collaboration with team members in supporting our veterans. Kathy is regularly asked to present at state and national conferences and approaches all tasks in a willing and creative way. She most recently developed a medical foster home caregiver training day and is also part of the national MFH conference. Veterans and family members constantly remark on her dedication to their health care.

*Department of Veterans Affairs*



## Civil Servant of the Year Awards

Department of Veterans Affairs

### Mark Willy

Housekeeper, Inpatient Medical Ward  
Minneapolis Medical Center



Mark Willy exemplifies an employee worthy of Civil Servant of the Year Status. Mark has been the housekeeper for the inpatient medical on 3L for over seven years. Mark's pride in his work is demonstrated each Monday morning as he makes his first initial rounds assessing the "damages" from the long weekend. He understands the great importance his job plays in delivering quality care to our veterans. If the environment is not clean and safe, the nurses are unable to operate effectively. Mark's self imposed standards of excellence in his work is shown daily as he takes pride in the quality standards he maintains. Mark is respectful of the patients' space and is always ready with a hello and a quiet laugh.

### Eileen Gleeson

Claims Assistant  
St. Paul VA Regional Office



Eileen is a VFW member and adjutant, focusing on donating to schools, running the scholarship programs and supporting the Yellow Ribbon Network. In her hometown, she helps with Yellow Ribbon events and solicits for donations from local business to support troops overseas and assists veteran's in nursing homes obtain copies of discharge papers and order their ribbons. Eileen volunteers with events at the Pension Management Center (PMC) and has initiated events and gift giving in Pension Triage. She has supplied food for the events through family connections. Eileen has a knack for getting the people around her involved in group events. She has been involved with the Needy Family events and is a member of the PMC Social Committee. Her hope is to instill a camaraderie among employees in the PMC.

### Kyle Lee

Loan Technician  
St. Paul VA Regional Office



Kyle Lee is a Loan Technician at the VA St. Paul Regional Loan Center. He is a dedicated employee who exhibits a high level of professionalism and is always willing to assist with additional duties. Kyle's enthusiasm for his job is evident in the additional projects that he has undertaken. Kyle possesses exceptional Microsoft Excel skills and has used those skills to develop several tools for Loan Guaranty. One such tool is a highly complex internal review system, which will be instrumental in assisting employees complete quality reviews. Kyle has developed these tools while simultaneously completing the duties within his role as a Loan Technician, in compliance with timeliness and quality requirements. Kyle has been a great asset to the Loan Guaranty Division.

### Linda Longman

Financial Management Analyst  
St. Paul VA Regional Office



Linda fully embraces her role in Finance and grasps how vitally important her contribution is to the success of VBA. Linda consistently goes above and beyond to ensure timely travel for "Challenge" trainers, "Challenge" students, station management, and others, frequently without critical lead-time. During FY10, Linda worked over 800 travel plans for station 335 totaling \$633,886.00. Of those funds \$380,369.26 were reimbursable and required extensive tracking. Because of Linda's hard work, and dedication, station 335 received all reimbursable funds due and was given proper credit back into the station budget. In addition, Linda approved and tracked travel plans for stations 437 and 438 totaling \$163,668.00. Linda's positive attitude and hard work ethic make her a valuable asset; she has distinguished herself as an exemplary employee.

## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



**Becky Schaar**  
Consumer Safety Technician  
Food & Drug Administration

In 2010, Becky showed superior performance by not only excelling at her own job in the FDA Investigations Branch, but also by leading and performing several major duties for the Administrative Branch. She was the main person who maintained the filing room, was the lead timekeeper, served as a back-up when necessary for other admin duties, and trained other employees how to file and perform timekeeping duties. She's an exceptional employee with a helpful and positive attitude who works hard to make sure jobs are completed correctly and in a timely manner.



**Barbara Lambus**  
Port Director  
Customs & Border Protection

Port Director Barbara Lambus has worked extensively with many organizations Wardens of the Duluth, MN federal Prison Camp, Sandstone, MN Federal Prison, Criminal Justice Dean of Fond Du Lac Colleges, University of Wisconsin, Superior Criminal Justice Program Director, and Hibbing Community College Criminal Justice Program Director as an advocate, advisor and leader in support of women in law enforcement, including St. Louis County and Douglas County. She also met with youth groups including "Girl Power", NAACP, numerous College Career Fairs, and Duluth Bethel Women Rehabilitation programs, and Project SOAR encouraging women to train or retrain for careers in law enforcement. She is recognized for her recruiting and community involvement efforts throughout northern Minnesota.



**Kathleen Mitchell**  
Management and Program Analyst  
Customs & Border Protection

Kathy has made outstanding contributions to the work of the Minneapolis Hiring Center. Kathy is the project manager for a web-based applicant workflow that tracks tens of thousands of entry-level law-enforcement applicants for CBP positions nationwide from certificate selection through pre-employment processes to entry-on-duty. She leads a large cross-functional team to gather and clarify our business requirements, test, and trouble-shoot the workflow components as they are developed. Kathy has provided strong leadership through many phases of this multi-year project. She has worked countless extra hours and displays an exemplary approach to her work. Her expertise has contributed greatly to the success of hiring applicants.



**Pam Montan**  
Human Resources Specialist  
Customs & Border Protection

Pam Montan continuously provides leadership supporting the CBP mission of protecting and safeguarding America's borders and protecting the public against terror. With over 15 years of federal service Pam brings leadership and initiative to the hiring of Customs and Border Protection Officers and Agriculture Specialists. She expertly manages the selection of thousands of applications. She capably adjusts priorities to meet agency needs and has served as a dedicated mentor to others by providing training, guidance, and oversight. She is confident, willing to listen, shows appreciation, and tries to find solutions that will benefit everyone. Her ability to reach out to others and make them feel "valued" goes a long way in creating a productive and great work environment.



## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



*Department of Homeland Security*

**Victor Chan**  
Human Resources Specialist  
Transportation Security Administration



**Transportation  
Security  
Administration**

Victor's positive attitude and the exemplary manner in which he manages benefits, retirements, and additional human resources programs has allowed our workforce to focus on their operational and administrative duties. Victor often volunteers his time at the checkpoints during peak travel periods, doing what he can to provide relief to his coworkers while delivering and excellent customer service to passengers. When faced with human resource challenges, he vigorously researches policy until he finds the answer. Victor demonstrates his dedication by routinely placing others' needs before his own, often supporting TSA employees in a humble, empathetic, and respectful way.

**Lola Jackson**  
Deputy Assistant Security Director-Screening  
Transportation Security Administration



**Transportation  
Security  
Administration**

Lola Jackson has been a dedicated public servant for over 7 years, starting as one of the first Managers for TSA. Ms. Jackson leads by example. She is always willing to step in and lend a hand to a fellow TSA employee. During the last year, Ms. Jackson has taken a leadership role in multiple projects to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the TSA workforce in the State of Minnesota. Her commitment to a timely resolution of issues that impact the well being of employees is exemplary. Ms. Jackson maintains a positive attitude and serves as a role model for others. Most of all, she is a great friend, and considers the over 650 Security employees as members of her family.

**Jason Nelson**  
Transportation Security Inspector  
Transportation Security Administration



**Transportation  
Security  
Administration**

During this past year, Jason participated in several initiatives with nation-wide implications in addition to his contributions to the State of Minnesota. He serves as a member of the International Support Team, which performs inspections at foreign airports. He also plays a critical role on the Joint Vulnerability Assessment Team where he helps identify mitigation strategies for domestic airports. Jason is the ultimate team player and is well respected by industry partners. He demonstrates a strong work ethic, positive attitude, and his high-quality efforts continue to strengthen the transportation sector.

**Jeffrey Toenges**  
Supervisory Attorney Advisor  
Transportation Security Administration



**Transportation  
Security  
Administration**

Jeff has 20 years of loyal civil service with the federal government in the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.; the United States Penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas; and the Federal Bureau of Prisons at the Federal Medical Center in Rochester, Minnesota. Jeff provides exceptional legal services for TSA operations in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska. His thoughtful, disciplined, and informed counsel is received with unquestioned respect for truth and law. His advice is based on years of exemplary and diverse experience within the federal government. Jeff is highly respected by his colleagues at all levels and is a vital asset to the Transportation Security Administration.

## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



### **Pat Bauer**

**Technical Expert  
Social Security Administration, Bemidji, MN**

Pat has a passion for helping at risk teenagers. She serves as a mentor and sits on the executive board for Kinship North. This program matches at risk youth with mentors who model positive attitudes and behaviors in their everyday lives. By emphasizing the importance of education and a strong work ethic, Pat has been successful at changing the lives of children. Even after Pat's first mentor child graduated from the program, Pat continued as her role model resulting in this young woman's employment and enrollment in college. Pat also provides respite care to special needs children and is a foster parent.



### **Peggy Byers**

**Claims Representative  
Social Security Administration, Bloomington, MN**

Congratulations to Peggy Byers, the Bloomington Social Security Office selection for Civil Servant of the Year. Peggy has over 25 years of dedicated service with the Social Security Administration. She has several responsibilities that are vital to the daily operations of the office. Peggy has a high level of integrity, she's very knowledgeable and she goes above and beyond to assure the public receives quality service. It is with pleasure that we recognize Peggy for this award.



### **Cherryl Kjos**

**District Manager  
Social Security Administration, Rochester, MN**

Cherryl is responsible for three Social Security offices in Minnesota (Rochester, Winona and Austin). Each office within her district is doing an exemplary job meeting the goals and objectives of the Social Security Administration and as such are providing outstanding public service to the citizens of southeastern Minnesota. In addition to her management duties, Cherryl is also involved in a number of activities that benefit all employees in Minnesota and the Chicago region. She is the lead on recruitment activities for the area. She attends job fairs, disability meetings and other events to ensure all offices hire the best qualified individuals. Over the last seven years she has been management representative gathering information on EEO issues. This involves a great time commitment as well.



### **Mary Kinzel**

**Enumeration Specialist  
Social Security Administration, Minneapolis, MN**

Mary is a dedicated public servant and believes in providing quality service. The Twin Cities Social Security Card Center serves 350-400 people per day and she often stays late to help serve visitors remaining after the office closes. She willingly mentors new employees, sharing her wealth of knowledge and her ability to research appropriate rules and regulations. She takes the initiative to send reminders to coworkers about special situations, keeping everyone informed and up to date. Mary is a great asset to the Twin Cities Social Security Card Center.

*Social Security Administration*



## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



### **Gloria Knatcal**

**Technical Expert  
Social Security Administration, Mankato, MN**



Gloria in her role as a Technical Expert has maintained, controlled and processed the vast majority of our internet claims. She has provided our staff with guidance on our cases that are more technical and difficult. She has helped mentor three recent hires and is currently mentoring a training class. She has over the years been a positive role model and a consistent performer for the citizens of southern Minnesota.

### **Julie Larson**

**Claims Representative  
Social Security Administration, St. Paul, MN**



Julie has been an outstanding federal employee for the past thirty-five years. She is recognized for her dedication to serving our unique and diverse public, with empathy and dignity. Julie contributes more than her share to her unit. She has a true "can do" attitude. Julie possesses much knowledge and technical proficiency. She has excelled in providing outstanding, compassionate, and caring service to the public. She maintains a positive attitude and strives to improve our customer's experience. Julie leads by example and is an exemplary public servant.

### **Heather MacDonald**

**Operations Supervisor  
Social Security Administration, Duluth, MN**



Heather provides an outstanding example of leadership to all staff members. Heather's willingness to train, mentor and make tough decisions are attributes to be emulated by others. In addition to her ability to lead in the public sector, Heather is a leader in her community serving as an elected city council member. Heather is also a member of the local Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory which is one of the leading nature reserves in North America.

### **Darlene Pagel**

**Contact Representative (Receptionist)  
Social Security Administration, Minneapolis, MN**



Darlene is the office receptionist for the Minneapolis Office of Disability Adjudication and Review, Social Security Administration. She patiently and effectively provides the information the public needs when arriving for a disability hearing. This includes knowledgeable communication with claimants, their attorneys, the medical and vocational experts, contract hearing reporters and the Administrative Law Judges. In addition, Darlene answers the incoming phone calls for a staff of about 80 employees. She directs calls to appropriate parties, provides status on claims, and answers multiple questions for clients and representatives. The ODAR office appreciates her competency in presenting a "first impression" of the ODAR Social Security role to the public.

*Social Security Administration*

## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



### **Nancy Price**

**Claims Representative  
Social Security Administration, Austin, MN**

Nancy is an employee on the front lines of Social Security that promotes that Quality of SSA Experience each and every day. She is a Generalist Claims Representative that provides superior customer service by reflecting courtesy, efficiency, accuracy and timeliness to those she serves. Many Customer Service Survey cards have been returned "thanking" her for the wonderful service and experience they had when visiting their local Social Security office. She shows leadership within the office with directing workloads and helping the staff understand various issues that come up in our day to day operations. She is an example of an outstanding Civil Servant and a proud representation for the Social Security Administration.



### **Eva Seidel**

**Technical Expert  
Social Security Administration , Brooklyn Center, MN**

Eva is a Technical Expert in the Brooklyn Center Social Security office. She has worked in the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Unit for more than 10 years. She serves as a mentor to new employees, informs colleagues of new policies and procedures and provides training. In 2010, she provided extensive training on SSI offsets to improve work performance within her unit. She volunteered to review initial claims and post entitlement cases and completed additional work assignments, which involved the Martinez Court cases and Alien Extension cases. Eva sets a good example for others to meet customer and agency expectations. As a community service, Eva volunteers each year to collect gifts around the holidays for a needy family selected through CEAP (Community Emergency Assistance Program).



### **Mary Steffes**

**Administrative Assistant  
Social Security Administration, St. Cloud, MN**

Mary is the primary advisor to the District Manager on administrative matters and is recognized by the entire staff in our District's three facilities as the expert in day-to-day administrative services essential for the efficient operation of the offices. She cheerfully helps employees with personnel matters while also managing the office's budget, acting as a liaison with our Regional office, procuring our supplies, managing travel, payroll, reports, facility management, etc. Mary performs highly accurate and timely staff support work in each of these areas, and is always willing to help wherever else she is needed. Mary is also very active in the community, participating in programs such as Make-A-Wish, reflecting very well on the reputation of all Federal employees.



### **Maaruf Yusuf**

**Claims Representative  
Social Security Administration, Minneapolis, MN**

Maaruf is an outstanding public servant. Each day he works with the public to ensure that they receive the courteous and efficient service they require. He is a caring and competent public face for the Social Security Administration each day. As one of just three Amharic translators in SSA's six-state Chicago Region, Maaruf accurately and efficiently translates Amharic documents for other SSA offices. We are proud to honor Maaruf Yusuf as the Minneapolis Social Security Administration's Civil Servant of the Year.

*Social Security Administration*



## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



*Independent Federal Agencies | Postal Service*

### **LaVonne Bittner**

**Administrative Investigative Assistant  
Office of Personnel Management, Federal Investigative Services**

Posthumously awarded for or exceptional meritorious service to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Federal Investigative Services (FIS), from June 1986 to March 2011. During this period, LaVonne's exemplary leadership, inspiring devotion to duty and administrative prowess epitomized the highest standards of Civil Service. LaVonne proactively streamlined administrative processes and procedures that were quickly adopted as best practices by the other field offices in the organization, saving 3,786 man hours and an estimated \$3.6 million dollars. Her vision and superior organizational skills were leveraged agency wide and were instrumental in preparing OPM FIS for the many challenges that were experienced during this timeframe.

### **Peter Desens**

**Associate Examiner  
Farm Credit Administration**



In 2010, Peter volunteered to serve as the Agency coordinator for the Northern Lights Combined Federal Campaign. Despite being a new staff member, Peter did a tremendous job in generating a new level of enthusiasm within the Agency's local office, particularly among many of the newer staff. He did a great job in communicating information about the campaign to others and helped generate new ideas for getting staff interested in contributing. He kept staff well informed of the progress toward meeting our office goal. His efforts had a significant positive effect on the level of overall contributions and the level of staff participation in this worthwhile campaign.

### **Melvin Boser**

**Lead Lender Relations Specialist  
Small Business Administration**



Mel's can-do attitude permeates the District Office and infuses it with the energy and excitement needed to accomplish our goals. Mel has taken over a leadership role in the Finance Division. His sense of responsibility ensures that the District Office is well-represented to Minnesota lenders, Resource Partners, and the small business community. Through his drive to make the Office a leader in SBA programs and services, Mel has been instrumental in developing programs such as Minnesota: The State of Recovery, The Small Business Fair at Earle Brown, Small Business Week Awards, and MBA Training. These programs have state-wide significance and reflect positively on the caliber of Mel's professionalism. Mel assumes responsibility to get out accurate and timely information about our ever-changing programs. Thanks to Mel's hard work and dedication, our office shines as a beacon to all SBA offices.

### **Edgar Gregory**

**Rural Letter Carrier  
Postal Service, Stone Lake, WI**



Edgar has been a dedicated Postal employee and an integral member of the Stone Lake community for decades. Edgar has just achieved 40 years of service as a rural letter carrier in Stone Lake WI. During his years of mail delivery service, he also has been active in volunteer service to the community. Edgar is a member of the town board, and has been since 1982. He also volunteers to assist with the Stone Lake Cranberry Festival each year. The event raises money for various local charities, such as the fire department, cub scouts, local scholarships and others. In 2008, Edgar was recognized as Man of the Year for his years of volunteer service.



## Civil Servant of the Year Awards



### Craig Kittel

BMEU Clerk  
Postal Service, New Richmond, WI

Craig, BMEU clerk at the New Richmond Post Office exemplifies professionalism in the workplace and is active in his community. His outstanding job performance has demonstrated results. As BMEU clerk for New Richmond, he accepts and processes bulk mailings that bring over 4,000,000 dollars in revenue to the USPS. His most recent review last month by the Western Area *showed no deficiencies* in BMEU SOX compliance. Craig is not only involved in the community, he is also a leader. He is an elected member of the New Richmond City Council. He also serves on the Park Board and is heavily involved with the Chamber of Commerce. During the winter Craig uses his spare time to coach varsity basketball for the New Richmond High School Tigers. In spring and summer he coaches legion baseball for 16-17 year old boys.



### Kevin Morgan

NDC Dock Clerk  
Postal Service, St. Paul, MN

Kevin spends his nights as a hardworking dock clerk at the NDC. During the day, he channels some of that energy into his volunteer work with the Patriot Color Guard. The Patriot Guard is a veteran's organization whose main mission is to stand Honor Guard at soldiers and veteran's funerals. The guard supports the families of these soldiers, shielding them from unwanted attention from the media or protesters. Kevin's work with these unsung heroes deserves recognition, as does this fine organization.



### John Olson

Postmaster  
Postal Service, Lowry, MN

John, Postmaster of Lowry Minnesota since 2008, is very active in his community. He is currently on the board of directors for the local Lions Club and was past Treasurer. John is active on the planning committee for Lowry's annual celebration; 2011 will be the 125th anniversary. John designed the official celebration logo used on various items of clothing sold to raise funds for a fireworks display. During these annual celebrations, John serves as coordinator for the "Grand Parade". He is currently one of five National Vice Presidents of the National League of Postmasters, has served as the President of the Minnesota Branch and is currently a branch Vice President. In this capacity, John has given training to Postmasters and mentors Postmasters to become more proficient at their jobs and more involved in their future as Postmasters. John serves on the District EAS Advisory, a group of Postal Leaders. As a committee member, he redesigned a presentation award given to workplace environment "Champion" offices.



### Darrell Ritzema

CFS Clerk  
Postal Service, Minneapolis, MN

Darrel is exemplary in community service primarily dedicated to military matters. He served 22 1/2 years in the US Air Force and retired as SMSgt. He is active in the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Retired Enlisted Association, lifetime trustee of the Noncommissioned Officer Association, Air Force Association, member of the 6910 Electronic Security Group Association, and the Freedom through Vigilance Association. He has corresponded with state legislatures to ensure key legislation is recommended concerning veterans and active duty, reserve, and Air National Guard service members. He assisted an Iraq veteran in obtaining a disability claim. At work, he ensures employees with military service have their photo displayed at the USPS Veterans Day event. He has donated monies, services, and time to many organizations. He is very active in Down Syndrome events and activities. He also assisted individuals writing resumes' which resulted in these individuals gaining employment.

Postal Service



## Civil Servant of the Year Awards

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*Notes*

# Civil Servant of the Year Awards



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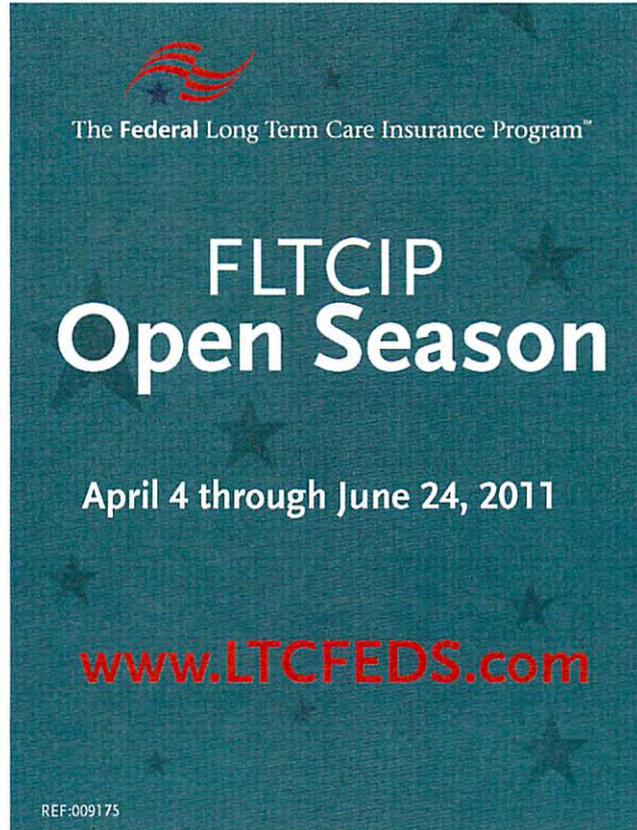
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**Color Guard:**

**Minnesota Army National Guard**

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**Crown Plaza Hotel, St. Paul, Minnesota**

**Master of Ceremonies:**

**Chester Slipek, Chair, Federal Executive Board**

**Keynote Speaker:**

**Ambassador Janice Jacobs, U.S. Department of State**

**Program and Poster Design:**

**Federal Executive Board Staff**

**Printing:**

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Antione Waller, Regional Director**

*Acknowledgments*



# Civil Servant of the Year Awards

*Acknowledgments*



## Receipt

**34<sup>th</sup> Federal Civil Servant Luncheon**

**May 6, 2011**

**Crown Plaza, St. Paul, MN**

**\$20.00**



### Federal Executive Board of *Minnesota*



**Chester Slipek, Chair**

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Civil Servant of the Year Awards Program

# Awards



2011

