



# FRONTLINE

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National Council of Social Security Management Associations, Inc.

## Special Interest Articles:

- Delegates Set the Path
- NCSSMA Recognizes Outstanding Community Service
- Special Achievement Awards

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*NCSSMA Lifetime Achievement Award presented to Tony Pezza for outstanding service... "by assuring that the knowledge and experience of front-line management are included in all phases of agency planning and decision making."*

*Joe Dirago, NCSSMA President*

## NCSSMA Blazes Down the Oregon Trail

NCSSMA delegates from all ten regions converged on downtown Portland, Oregon in early October to set a shared vision of how managers can best guide the direction of the Social Security Administration in the coming year. These dedicated managers were eager to begin "blazing the trail for the next 75 years," as the conference theme suggested. After a very gracious welcome to the "City of Roses" by the Northwest Management Association (NWMA), these managers quickly set to work to agree upon many resolutions that will direct the association's work in the coming year.

The conference began with welcoming words from Joyce Sullivan, representing the NWMA host committee, and Darin Park, President of NWMA. Then, Beth Hidano, Area II Director in the Seattle Region, and Stanley Friendship, Seattle's Regional Commissioner, set the tone for the conference with speeches centered on the conference's theme. Beth Hidano reminded managers that they are the "leaders who are blazing the trail, breaking trail in new territory". Stanley Friendship recognized NCSSMA as a collaborative partner that works cooperatively with the agency's Executive Staff for the good of the agency. He also thanked the managers for doing "a tremendous job for the American public". These messages echoed through the beginning of the business meeting as Commissioner Michael Astrue and Deputy Commissioner for Operations Mary Glenn-Croft set the stage by providing their current perspectives.

Although Commissioner Astrue was not able to attend the conference, he did



*Portland, Oregon - the "City of Roses"*

engage in active conversation with the delegates through a video conference. After thanking the managers for another great year, he described his goals for the remainder of his term as further reducing backlogs, taking significant steps toward replacement of the National Computer Center, and improving service to the public by focusing both on waiting times and quality of service. He also shared his vision of the future for field offices, describing the future as an "evolution rather than a revolution". He expects field office positions will gradually evolve from handling repetitive, high volume workloads to handling the most complex cases while automated services begin handling more of the simple cases. He sees this evolution as an opportunity for employees to gain higher job satisfaction through exercising their professional skills in more interesting workloads. However, he also emphasized that automated services will never replace field offices since there will always be many complex workloads that require skilled employees. In fact, he estimated that there will likely be the same number of field offices ten years from now.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## NCSSMA Blazes Trail *continued*

He recapped the agency's accomplishments in increasing the use of online services during the past year as well as describing the upcoming publicity efforts to encourage more of the public to try these services in the coming year. He shared his forecast for this year's budget process, indicating that this will be a challenging year to get the budget passed. The Commissioner also addressed the hot topic of ODAR backlogs by sharing statistics related to recent ODAR staffing increases as well as describing the backlog improvements that have already occurred. He predicted that ODAR will likely stop being the focus of the agency's budget by the end of FY 2011 at which time field offices and customer service needs will likely become the primary focus of the budget. After speaking on his prepared topics, he welcomed and responded candidly to questions from the audience.

In his introduction of Mary Glenn-Croft, NCSSMA President Joe Dirago thanked her for her "transparent, refreshing" leadership style and for maintaining an "open, productive" relationship with NCSSMA. She responded with many thanks to the managers for all that they accomplished through their leadership in FY 2010. She shared statistics and celebrated the agency's field office FY 10 accomplishments before moving on to talk about the new fiscal year. She also confirmed what managers already expected by saying that there are more challenges ahead during what is likely to be a tough year. The Deputy Commissioner added, "There is not one challenge that we can't take on individually and collectively. We are a powerful group of individuals."

In FY 11, the Deputy Commissioner expects payment accuracy to become even more of an agency focus so

integrity workloads will remain high priority. Although accuracy did improve from 89% in FY 08 to 91% in FY 09, she still expects significant pressure to increase the accuracy rate further. She also explained that we are already seeing changes in processes to improve SSI accuracy such as the introduction of Internet and telephone wage reporting as well as the Access to Financial Institutions (AFI) initiative. In addition to accuracy, the agency will continue to focus on DDS and ODAR pending levels as well as courteous service to the public. Finally, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized that field office security will remain a very high priority during the next year.

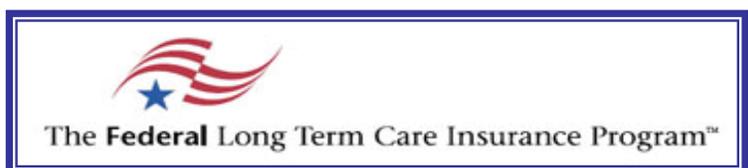
After a full morning of gaining perspective from the Executive Staff, President Dirago seated the delegates from all ten regions and the association promptly got down to its own business matters. Committee chairs read the annual reports and the treasurer presented the proposed 2011 budget. Then, President Dirago gave his report on the past year, which explained in detail why, "NCSSMA is viewed as a valuable contributor to the success of the Social Security Administration". He emphasized how productive and positive NCSSMA's working relationship has become with both Commissioner Astrue and Deputy Commissioner Glenn-Croft. He also highlighted the effective role that many association members have played in national workgroups during the past year, giving the association an internal voice in shaping policy. Joe also highlighted the association's presence on Capitol Hill during the past year, including a description of frequent meetings between Congressional Representatives and association leaders as well as the continual efforts of Rachel Emmons (NCSSMA's Washington Representative). He explained how all of these "tireless efforts" played a significant role in Social Security's favorable 2010 budget and reassured the group that the association will continue these efforts to obtain as favorable a budget as possible for FY 2011 and beyond.

President Dirago also described the association's internal accomplishments of the past year. He applauded the

*(Continued on page 3)*



*Commissioner Astrue addresses the group via video conference call.*



[www.ltcfeds.com](http://www.ltcfeds.com)

## NCSSMA Blazes Trail *continued*

Communications Committee's success in transforming *FrontLine* into "a valuable tool". He proudly described the Staffing and Training Committee's success with both the Field Office Management Survey and the first-ever Teleservice Center Management Survey, emphasizing how these surveys provided a strong basis for the papers that the association submitted to agency leadership regarding field office telephone service and quality concerns. President Dirago also highlighted the Membership Committee's successful coordination with the regional management associations in pursuing new members through the membership drive, which resulted in 141 new members. President Dirago ended his report by promising that the association will continue striving to improve the agency's policies in order to provide the best possible service to the American public, to advocate directly to Congress for the best possible budget, and to advocate for NCSSMA members' interests through the pursuit of this year's resolutions. As soon as he concluded his speech, the delegates took center stage as they began debating the proposed resolutions.

In addition to further debate of resolutions, the second day of the conference also brought more perspective on the future of the agency. Chief Information Officer, Frank Baitman, shared his vision of the agency's automation future. He intends to focus on "encouraging the use of the most cost-effective channels" for customer service by considering which service channels (phone, Internet, face-to-face) are best suited for various workloads. He also hopes to make "the multiple service channels seamless internally" so that employees can see what was previously discussed through other service channels, rather than forcing them to repeat the information gathering steps that were already completed at earlier contacts. He even sees the possibility of using software to channel the public directly to the level of employee that can authorize each action rather than having multiple layers of employees duplicate service to each customer. CIO Baitman also discussed other systems issues such as developing appropriate levels of authentication for various online services and resolving security obstacles in using social media for public outreach. Finally, he explained the many ways that his office seeks innovative ideas, both from the public and from Social Security employees located in his office as well as throughout the country.

Then, NCSSMA's Washington Representative, Rachel Emmons, shared her perspective on the political future



*Mt. Hood*

for the agency. As expected, she shared a somewhat gloomy outlook for the budget process during the next few years. But, at the same time, she pointed out that the Social Security Administration is "light years ahead" of where it was years ago in terms of being a budget priority for Congress. She was also confident that the continuing efforts of the agency's Executive Staff, NCSSMA Officers, and other advocacy groups would continue to positively influence Congress in this year's budget decisions. Rachel also shared her professional insight into how the mid-term elections would likely impact the Congressional view of Social Security in coming years, providing the delegates with a crucial frame to apply as they considered the proposed resolutions.

The final day of meetings included a presentation from the Kansas City Management Association about the 2011 Annual Meeting plans to be held in Branson, Missouri. NCSSMA's 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting concluded with the election of NCSSMA Executive Committee Officers for the coming year.

***FrontLine* is Produced by the  
Communications Committee**

**Bethany Paradis (Chair),  
Albert Alvarez  
Fred Bourjaily  
Jewell Colbert  
Susana Diaz (Deputy Chair)  
Patty Maddox (Deputy Chair)  
Luann Maxson  
Virginia Schroder  
Jan Still  
Eric Williamson  
Clayton Wood**



**President's Corner:**  
**A GREAT 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting and the Year Ahead!**  
**Joe Dirago, NCSSMA President**

During the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the National Council of Social Security Management Associations in Portland, Oregon, I was re-elected President of the National Council. It has been an honor and privilege to serve as your President this past year and I am very pleased with what we have achieved for the agency and our membership. NCSSMA is strong and vibrant and we should be proud of our accomplishments!

The Northwest Management Association and the Seattle Region hosted a GREAT meeting! Our guest speakers, Commissioner Astrue, Mary Glenn-Croft, Deputy Commissioner for Operations, and Frank Baitman, Chief Information Officer, were informative and interesting. We debated and passed 21 resolutions, which are the primary vehicle for expressing the will of the membership and chart a course for NCSSMA's Executive Committee to follow.

A highlight for me was recognizing five individuals with NCSSMA Awards. Dennis Purifoy (Community Service Award), Jim Burkert and Dean Dal Ben (Special Achievement Awards), Tony Pezza (Lifetime Achievement Award), and Bethany Paradis (Joseph P. Collins Award) have all made invaluable contributions to NCSSMA and SSA.

Many challenges remain and we have plenty of work to do in the coming year! The objectives I have identified for NCSSMA include:

- Build on our positive and productive relationship with agency leadership through effective communications and workgroup participation;
- Keep our membership informed and involved through our committee structure, communication through FrontLine, the NCSSMA Website, and our Regional Associations;
- Pursue our succession planning efforts to develop NCSSMA's Future Leaders to ensure a strong organization;
- Continue recruitment efforts because our membership is our lifeblood;
- Intensify Grassroots efforts with membership and the advocacy community as we strive to secure the best budget possible for SSA; and
- With our Washington Representative and key partners, advocate for important legislative initiatives including extending the probationary period for new employees,

requiring management training, and advocating for appropriate federal employee pay and benefits.

We are off to a tremendous start and since the Portland meeting, I have been involved in the following significant activities to address our initiatives and objectives:

- NCSSMA provided testimony at the November 15, Field Hearing held in Akron, Ohio, on Improving Social Security Disability Insurance Claim Processing in Ohio, held by the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management. Rick Warsinskey, Past President, provided testimony on behalf of NCSSMA, and Rachel Emmons and I attended the hearing.
- On November 17, NCSSMA Leadership met personally with agency leadership responsible for the rewrite of the Agency Strategic Plan (ASP) and provided input from the perspective of frontline providers of SSA service.
- NCSSMA Vice President Steve Clifton, Rachel, and I met with key Congressional Representatives from the House Social Security Subcommittee and the Senate Finance Committee on November 18. Our meetings focused on advocating for the FY 2011 SSA Budget and adequate funding.
- On November 19, Steve, Rachel and I met with the Social Security Advisory Board to communicate our priorities and issues for the coming year.
- NCSSMA Leadership also had a productive meeting with the SSA Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner for Operations regarding common interests.

On December 15, Rachel and I will represent NCSSMA at the Government Managers Coalition (GMC) Meeting in Washington, DC. The GMC will then meet with OPM Director John Berry concerning issues pertinent to federal employees and the Report issued by the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform.

There is no doubt that the new NCSSMA Executive Committee will work diligently to represent you. During my closing remarks at the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual NCSSMA Meeting, I challenged the delegates and members to become more involved, to spread the word about the positive impact NCSSMA has for our agency, and to recruit new members. With your assistance, we can make a real difference!

## Delegates Set the Path for the Coming Year

One of the main purposes of the NCSSMA annual meeting is to introduce, discuss, perfect, and vote on proposed resolutions that will become the focus of NCSSMA's work for the coming year. This year, the regional associations submitted 40 possible resolutions to the Resolutions Committee. The committee reviewed these proposed resolutions to identify redundancy, and, then worked with the regional associations to merge similar resolutions. After this refining process, the committee presented 22 resolutions to the delegates. The delegates proceeded to carefully debate each resolution prior to voting on merits of each suggestion. Although changes were made to many of the proposed resolutions, all but one resolution was adopted, which indicates that the Resolutions Committee did excellent work in their initial review of these proposals.

One of the first resolutions to pass directs NCSSMA to work with both Central Office and Congress in developing more enforceable security measures to protect the safety of the agency's employees. In line with both Commissioner Astrue's and Deputy Commissioner Glenn-Croft's emphasis on workload quality, the association passed a resolution that NCSSMA will work with Central Office to ensure that the agency maintains adequate supervision levels and effective systems to accomplish quality work products. This resolution also directs NCSSMA to encourage the agency to consider the balance between production and quality when setting new goals.

Several of the approved resolutions specifically relate to management positions. One resolution addresses the ratio of management to bargaining unit employees in field offices and TSCs by directing the association to work with Central Office to ensure that these ratios are adequate to support effective program administration. The challenges faced in single manager offices are highlighted in this resolution. Another resolution advocates for "timely, effective, and complete training of new managers and supervisors" as the increasing turnover in the management ranks limits the availability of seasoned mentors for new managers.

The delegates passed several resolutions that advocate for additional resources. One of these resolutions describes the impact of the Telephone Service Replacement Project (TSRP) on field office service delivery and seeks adequate resources to support "timely and responsive" telephone service to the public. Another resolution recognizes the impact of the increasing volume of disability claim

allowances and related workloads. The agency's focus on hiring additional staff for ODAR and DDS over the last few years has resulted in more claims and appeals coming to the field offices for adjudication. When coupled with the increase in new claims due to the poor economy, field offices are straining to process workloads.

A few resolutions address specific workloads and initiatives. For example, one resolution addresses the large volume of Teleservice Center referrals to field offices, many of which are a result of current TSC Operating Guide (TSCOG) policies that limit Teleservice Representatives' ability to input changes to benefit records. This resolution seeks to change the TSCOG policies to reduce the restrictions, resulting in more timely service to the public and reduction of the backlogs in field offices. Another resolution addresses the additional work created by incomplete, paper claim submissions from third party representatives. This resolution advocates for SSA to charge a service fee when representatives do not submit complete claims and appeals through the more efficient Internet system. Finally, a resolution was passed in support of establishing regional representative payee cadres to handle the complex organizational payee reviews. In many regions, these reviews are handled by local field office management who are challenged with time and resource constraints to give these reviews appropriate attention.

These are only the highlights of the 21 resolutions that were adopted. The entire list of approved resolutions will soon be available on [www.NCSSMA.org](http://www.NCSSMA.org) in the "Members Only" section. The wide range of important issues covered by this year's resolutions will keep the committees and national officers busy advocating for managers' concerns throughout the coming year.

**We welcome your letters, stories,  
comments, editorials or suggestions for  
future articles.**

**Send your feedback to:  
Bethany.Paradis@ssa.gov**

## Joseph P. Collins Award Honors Bethany Paradis

On the last evening of this year's Annual Meeting, NCSSMA presented its most prestigious award to Bethany Paradis, District Manager of the Saco, Maine Field Office. NCSSMA established the Joseph P. Collins Award in 1978 as a tribute to the first President of the Council. Each year, the award is given to the NCSSMA member who has done the most to further the objectives of the National Council. It recognizes a single, outstanding act during the preceding year or sustained, outstanding performance that extended into the year leading up to the award.

This year's recipient received the award in recognition of her tireless, sustained effort over a period of several years. In addition to being an active member of both the New England Social Security Management Association and NCSSMA for many years, she served as the Vice President for NCSSMA in 2007-2008 and the Executive Officer from 2003 to 2006. However, it was her role as Chair of the NCSSMA Communications Committee that really brought Bethany prominence. Bethany has very successfully chaired this committee since 2007. As the leader of this committee, she acts as the editor of *FrontLine* as well as overseeing the association's website. She works closely with the Executive Committee to ensure that both of these communication tools accurately represent NCSSMA's perspectives.

Although *FrontLine* already existed when Bethany took the helm, it was nothing like today's *FrontLine*. According to the New England Social Security Management Association's (NESSMA) nomination, Bethany "took on the task of reviving and revitalizing the publication." Within months of becoming the committee's chair, she released her first issue in February 2008. According to Paul Gilfillan, President of NESSMA, it was "colorful, fresh, well-written, and garnered a very positive response from readers". Since that first issue, she has continued to produce *FrontLine* on a quarterly basis to keep NCSSMA's members up to date regarding the association's national activities and concerns. She also worked with the Executive Committee to create an editorial board that now reviews each proposed publication. In addition, she assisted in writing policies and procedures to guide *FrontLine's* production process. These efforts yielded positive results. According to Joe Dirago, President of NCSSMA, Bethany, "transformed *FrontLine* into a publication that is interesting and informative, communicates our views, but is sensitive to



Bethany Paradis and Joe Dirago

our relationship with leadership and outside parties". She has turned *FrontLine* into an accessible tool that keeps the membership informed nationwide while it also effectively advocates for the association's objectives, both with agency leadership and on Capitol Hill.

It was truly a pleasure to watch Bethany receive this well-deserved recognition for her dedication and commitment to *FrontLine* and to NCSSMA. Genuinely surprised as her name was announced, she graciously accepted the award by acknowledging the other NCSSMA leaders who helped bring *FrontLine* to its current role as a very effective voice for the organization as well as thanking those who helped prepare her for her role in NCSSMA. Shortly after receiving this honor, she humbly passed the accolades along to the Communications Committee members by sending them a message that told them, "You all deserve the credit. I couldn't have done it without you." Truthfully, the committee could not do it without Bethany's strong vision and leadership, which unites our separate voices into a consistent and polished voice that furthers NCSSMA's cause throughout each year. Bethany truly deserves this highest possible recognition for consistently giving more time and devotion than is expected to every issue.



## Delegates Place Their Confidence in 2011 Executive Committee

After listening to speeches and meeting individually with the candidates to learn their perspectives, the delegates elected NCSSMA's 2011 leaders on the final morning of the meeting. In his speech, Joe Dirago, District Manager of the Newburgh, NY Field Office (FO) defined a number of ambitious goals that he would pursue if re-elected as President. He pledged to keep the membership informed and committed to continuing NCSSMA's membership drive as well as succession management efforts to prepare members to move into leadership roles in the coming years. Finally, he defined his key goal as continuing to advocate for budget and management issues, both with Congress and with the agency's Executive Staff. Because of his success as President in the past year, he was promptly re-elected.

In the only contested race, Steve Clifton, District Manager of the Greeley, CO FO and Fred Bourjaily, District Manager of the Flint, MI FO competed to become Vice President. Fred Bourjaily has previously served as the Chicago Social Security Management Association's President and NCSSMA Vice President as well as participating in a variety of national workgroups and committees. In his speech, he described his key strength as his understanding of and ability to communicate with agency executives, which he developed through his history of national workgroup involvement. He recognized that NCSSMA has many challenges ahead and assured the delegates that he was prepared to meet those challenges. Steve Clifton has represented the Denver Region Social Security Management Association since 2005, including serving as President. Steve was NCSSMA's Executive Officer from 2009 until February 2010, when he was elected Vice President. In his speech, he described his success at building effective relationships with the Denver Region's Executive Staff in his role as Regional President. He also described the many positive meetings that he had with agency leadership and Congress during his past months as national Vice President. He attributed his success in these meetings to his ability to remain calm

under pressure and his commitment to frank and open communication. Although both individuals were worthy candidates, Steve Clifton was re-elected to the position of Vice President.

Secretary Billie Armenta, District Manager of the Phoenix DT, AZ FO expressed her desire to maintain NCSSMA's current momentum by remaining in the Secretary position where she can work to keep lines of communication open with both the agency's Executive Staff and Capitol Hill. Treasurer Anna Gutierrez, District Manager of the Las Cruces, NM FO described her strengths as being "diligent, precise, and accountable," all of which have allowed her to successfully organize NCSSMA's quarterly meetings during the past year and maintain the appropriate financial statements. She promised to spend NCSSMA's money wisely in pursuit of NCSSMA's agenda. Both the Secretary and Treasurer were re-elected to their positions for the coming year.

A new candidate introduced herself to the delegation while explaining what she could offer as the new TSC Representative. Andrea Wahle, Unit Supervisor at the Auburn, WA TSC, described her goals as increasing the ICTU and career growth opportunities in the TSCs, keeping the Executive Committee informed regarding TSC issues, and encouraging the Executive Committee to maintain a global view of all field employees (including TSC employees). She was elected to fill the vacancy left by Brian Russell, last year's TSC representative.

The re-election of most of the Executive Committee, combined with the addition of one new officer, will allow NCSSMA to maintain consistency in the relationships that they have been successfully developing with the agency's Executive Staff and Congress while also keeping them open to some new perspectives. These very devoted officers will carry the delegates' confidence with them as they work tirelessly to advocate for Social Security management across the nation in the coming year.

*Kenneth "Scott" Hale,  
Billie Armenta,  
Steve Clifton*



*Joe Dirago,  
Anna Gutierrez,  
Greg Heineman,  
Andrea Wahle*



## The Teleservice Connection

by Andrea Wahle, TSC Representative

Two years ago, we began to hear rumors of December becoming part of the TSC Peak Period. In October, the announcement from the Office of Telephone Services (OTS) made it official. OTS forecasters believe the past patterns of calls related to IRMAA, the lack of a COLA and people wanting to file for benefits will increase our call volumes over past years. This provides a bit of a challenge for supervisors who need to continue to work with employees to meet agency goals, but may not receive any meeting or training time in December.

OTS has kept managers well informed of possible Level 5 Days this past year and will continue to do so. This means we may need to utilize this time effectively at a moment's notice. I am sure there are many strategies for dealing with the challenges Peak Season provides, but I believe nothing tops being organized and having a plan in place for using any available amount of time provided. During Peak Season, I keep a "meeting" folder on my desk. Any item I would normally share during a unit meeting is placed in this folder – highest priority items on top. At the end of the week, I discard anything that is either no longer relevant or

that I have been able to send out in an email. I try not to burden the unit with too many emails since their allotted reading time is best utilized keeping up to date with policy changes.

A white board can be used to advise TSRs of available overtime or to announce how well the 800# is doing at meeting agency goals. As of November 18<sup>th</sup>, the YTD Average Busy Rate (ABR) was 1.2% and YTD Average Speed of Answer (ASA) was 162 seconds. FY 11 goals are 6% ABR and 267 seconds for ASA. How do you meet the challenges of staying connected and keeping your unit informed during Peak Season? I would love to hear your responses and will share your hints and tips in an upcoming issue of *FrontLine*.

I look forward to representing your interests over the next year, but cannot do so effectively without your help. I encourage you to become more involved in NCSSMA by voicing your concerns, hopes and fears to me or your regional TSC representative. Please feel free to email your ideas to me at [andrea.wahle@ssa.gov](mailto:andrea.wahle@ssa.gov)

## FEEA Scholarships Awarded By Lynn King

The FEEA scholarship winners for 2010-2011 have been announced. Special congratulations to Bruce Fraley, Atlanta Region immediate Past President, whose son Benjamin was awarded a FEEA scholarship! Bruce, you are justifiably proud of Ben!

Also of special note, FEEA awarded a special scholarship this year in remembrance of Bettye Stroud to Ty Boudreaux, whose mother works in the Social Security office in Houma, Louisiana. Many of you will remember Bettye as a past NCSSMA Community Service Award winner, an active supporter of the NCSSMA grass roots effort, and a leader in DRMA. We lost Bettye to cancer this past year; this one time award was made possible by the designated donations of several NCSSMA members and retired members.

Two employees and 20 children of SSA employees won

scholarships this year totaling \$35,750.00. We should all be proud of our part in making the contributions that allow for this support of our co-workers and their children in continuing their education.

It is CFC season. Please consider contributing to FEEA, CFC # 11185. You can order supplies for the campaign season including a four-minute DVD at [www.FEEA.org](http://www.FEEA.org).

As I have mentioned previously, the scholarship program is only a small part of what you do through FEEA. Meeting the needs of our employees during catastrophic occurrences and in the day to day obligations they have is an even more important reason to contribute to FEEA this CFC season. I consider my contributions to FEEA money well invested in supporting my employees and co-workers in time of need and in supporting the educational needs of our employees and their children.

## NCSSMA Recognizes Outstanding Community Service



*Joe Dirago, Dennis Purifoy, Mary Glenn-Croft*

As part of the National Council's efforts to recognize and encourage the public service that Social Security Management Association members provide to their communities, it established a national Community Service Award. This award is presented annually to a management association member nominated by the Regional Management Associations for his/her involvement in community affairs, volunteer services, civic clubs, humanitarian deeds, etc. NCSSMA's Communications Committee determines the winner. Joe Dirago, NCSSMA President, was pleased to present this year's award to Dennis Purifoy, District Manager in Moore, Oklahoma.

Dennis was at work as ADM in the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995. He witnessed the death and destruction that resulted from the terrorist bombing of that building on that day. His name is on a wall of the memorial listing the survivors of that event. The nomination described Dennis as an eloquent spokesperson for survivors of the bombing and stated that he has represented SSA so well in that role. Shortly after the bombing, Dennis served as a liaison to the Federal Executive Board in coordinating activities between Federal agencies impacted by the bombing. Since 1995, he has served on the Planning Committee for the Oklahoma City Memorial Museum, the Conscience Committee, and the Survivor Definition Committee for the Memorial. Since 2009, he has served on the Memorial's Board of Directors. In addition to his service to the Oklahoma City Memorial, Dennis has also been very active in his local church, Church of Good Shepherd in Yukon, Oklahoma. He served on the Staff Parish Relations Committee of the church in 2004-2005 and was the Administrative Board Chair for the church in 2000. Dennis was very pleased to receive this honor as he expressed his appreciation to NCSSMA.

### Community Service Honorable Mentions

Selecting the honoree for the Community Service Award is always challenging. All of the nominees are very deserving and should be commended for their dedication. We would like to take this opportunity to recognize the other nominees for this award and to congratulate them on their nominations. We owe them gratitude for the selfless service they provide and for the example they set for the rest of us.

#### **Cuong Do, Operations Supervisor, Saco, ME**

Cuong is one of the co-founders of the Vietnamese-American Association of Maine (VAAM) that was established in March of 2009. VAAM is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the community while educating and preserving the Vietnamese culture for the citizens of Maine. The organization's vision and mission are to cultivate the spirit of giving, sharing, and enriching the lives of Vietnamese Americans throughout Maine communities by promoting social and educational programs. To learn more on VAAM, please visit ([www.vaaminfo.org](http://www.vaaminfo.org))

#### **Tommie Aaron, District Manager, Augusta, GA**

In the early 1990s, Tommie became involved in promoting education. As a founding member of the Project Hope (Helping Other People Excel), she saw the positive effect of working with others in the school systems. This committee sponsored college students to work in middle schools with at risk youth. Tommie is a current member of the Board of Directors of the Southeastern Technical College. She also has served as chairperson of the Augusta Technical College board since 2003. In her 3<sup>rd</sup> term as President of the Augusta Chapter of Savannah State University National Alumni Association, Tommie has been instrumental in coordinating and planning a variety of national fundraisers. The local chapter is active in the community sponsoring events to provide scholarships for local students in the area to attend Savannah State University. Tommie is also the founding committee member for Community Voice Mail. This program provides a voicemail account for individuals without telephones to receive messages. Tommie is currently on the Advisory Board for MAGIC (Mentoring a Girl in Construction) which is designed to highlight another opportunity for girls in high school who do not have college aspirations. Tommie was also a past chairperson of the CSRA Federal Executive Association.

*(Continued on page 10)*

**ARMA**

Erika Marte  
Stephanie Chavis  
Robin Casey  
John Trueluck  
Lisa Retcho  
Tina Clark  
Pedro Perez  
Penni C. Wall

**CSSMA**

Julie Hancock  
Milagros Torres  
Silvia Feliciano

**KCMA**

Kevin Bishop  
Matt Skelton  
Stacy Wood

**NESSMA**

Alketa Stroka  
Lorena Ayala

**NYRMS**

Laseana Peart  
Raquel Travera  
Luis Diaz  
Angelina Martinez  
Christina Collier  
Michelle Brown  
Ana Javan

**SFRMA**

Mark J. Schaub  
Kanita K. Ginwright  
Tuan Nguyen  
Hollie H. Phan  
Claudia Castellanos  
Lauren Hirata  
Lisa Leong

**DRMA**

Heather Williams  
Jonathan Rasco  
Carolyn Bruck  
Isidro Salas  
Diana Dang  
Sonya Stokes  
Phyllis Dills  
Edward Meador

**Community Service** continued

**Sue Solseth, District Manager, Bismarck, ND**

Sue has been involved in the Mandan Chapter of QUOTA for the last 8 years holding several officer positions including President for the past two years. This organization provides housing for abused and homeless women and children; collects used hearing aids so the parts can be used to supply hearing aids to impoverished countries; sponsors scholarships for children to attend a camp for the hearing impaired; and organizes fundraising projects to get Life Line Amplification System put into schools in addition to many other activities. Sue also volunteered for Meals on Wheels for 20 years and has served on its Board of Directors. She has taught Sunday school classes for 12 years.

**NCSSMA Presents Special Achievement Awards**

In addition to presenting the traditional Community Service and Joseph P. Collins Awards, this year three additional members received special recognition for their service to NCSSMA from President Joe Dirago at the Annual Meeting Banquet. Jim Burkert, Deputy Assistant Regional Commissioner for Management and Operations Support in the Seattle Region, was the first to be awarded for his, *“outstanding service, commitment and dedication to the mission and principles of the National Council.”* Jim served as NCSSMA Treasurer on two occasions and most recently was serving as Vice President until his selection to the National Leadership Development Program. In his presentation Joe stated, *“Those of you that have worked with Jim, know that he candidly expresses his views, but his approach is positive and constructive. He believes strongly in the value of community-based service.”* On the nomination received from Darin Park, Northwest Association President, he indicated that Jim, *“is highly respected at both the Regional and National levels of our organization. He is a prime example of professionalism in all that he does. He has demonstrated his leadership abilities in helping shape our association and agency for the better.”*

The second Special Achievement Award was presented to Dean Dal Ben who has been NCSSMA's Webmaster since 2006. He has continued to serve NCSSMA in that capacity even after he retired from SSA in January 2010. Dean was significantly involved in the Management Surveys completed in 2005, 2007, 2009 and the two completed in 2010, including our first ever TSC Survey. He helped in preparing the surveys, the publication to the website, the compilation and analysis of data, the creation of graphs and charts, as well as the writing of the Survey Reports. Earlier this year, Dean was an instrumental part of a Communications Workgroup that made recommendations to revise our website. This initiative provided broad website guidelines and procedures that will transcend NCSSMA Presidents and Webmasters. Recently Dean coordinated the transfer of our

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Special Achievement Awards *continued*

website to a new web host provider. He analyzed the available options, provided a detailed assessment of advantages and made a recommendation to the Executive Committee. In presenting this honor, Joe stated, *“Dean’s commitment to communicating NCSSMA’s voice has certainly contributed to the betterment of our organization and we greatly appreciate his efforts.”*

The final award presented was a Lifetime Achievement Award for dedication to the purpose and mission of NCSSMA for many years. This award was presented to Tony Pezza, District Manager of the Hackensack, NJ Field Office. Tony was National President from 2001 to 2003. He was recognized by NCSSMA for his outstanding contributions with the Joseph P. Collins Award in 2003. He also served on the NCSSMA Executive Committee for 2 years as Past President and continues to be actively involved in NCSSMA activities. He is currently the Chair of the Management Structure Committee. This past year, he represented NCSSMA on the SSA Agency Level Workgroup to comply with the President’s Executive Order creating Labor Management Forums. *“Tony’s expertise in this area is unparalleled.”* Joe stated. He went on to say, *“Tony has always been a strong and vocal advocate for SSA management. He pursues collaborative and cooperative relationships with SSA leadership, while passionately representing our cause. Tony has been instrumental in achieving gains for management in the areas of classification equity, supervisory ratios and labor management relations. His efforts and distinguished service are truly deserving of recognition in the form of a NCSSMA Lifetime Achievement Award. The award states: In recognition of your outstanding service, superior leadership and dedication to improving management and program administration in the Social Security Administration by assuring that the knowledge and experience of front-line management are included in all phases of agency planning and decision making.”*

Congratulations to Jim, Dean, and Tony. Clearly, they are very deserving of our recognition and appreciation.

### FrontLine’s Editorial Review Board

**Joe Dirago, NCSSMA President**  
**Greg Heineman, NCSSMA Immediate Past President**  
**Rachel Emmons, Washington Representative**  
**Penny Emmele, KCMA Area 2 Representative**  
**Kathryn Rhoads, Former TSC Representative**

### NCSSMA New Members continued:

#### PRMA

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 Andrew Mumford  
 Kelly Morrell  
 Theresia French  
 Victoria Benton  
 Ingrid Colon  
 Karen Fallen  
 Bobby Thomas  
 Beverly Dorsey  
 Kathy Watford  
 Joan Permar  
 Sherita Deal  
 Barbara Watson  
 Roger Hyneman  
 Sharon Jules  
 Michael Kirk  
 Vasiliki O’Neill  
 Tammy Walker

#### DRSSMA

Deborah Budde  
 April Reed

### Membership

If you have not joined your Regional Management Association, **now** is the time! Discover current affairs in the agency and on Capitol Hill. Connect with your counterparts across the nation, meet new people and share innovative and resourceful ideas.

### **You can make a difference— get involved!**

We are always looking for great people to be on our committees or workgroups. It is an opportunity to do something new and different.

Talk to your Regional Representatives to learn more about NCSSMA, how to join, or how to get more involved. We need your feedback.

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**NCSSMA Thanks NWMA Host Committee**

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Northwest Management Association for hosting a fabulous annual meeting for us in Portland, Oregon. There is a tremendous amount of work involved in organizing one of these meetings. We appreciate the time and effort expended by the members of the Host Committee who had this daunting responsibility. They carried out their duties with grace and efficiency. Darin Park, President of NWMA, acknowledged their efforts at the banquet and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them once again.

The members of the Host Committee include:

Joyce Sullivan  
Jari Frassenei  
Susan Kost  
Brent Whinney  
Bill Dingess  
Bessie Young  
Nancie Stout

Joyce Johnston  
Cheryl Bailey  
Diana Myers,  
Chris Detzler  
Melody Huynh  
Brandi Keeth  
Terry Temple



*Joyce Johnston, Jari Frassenei, and Joyce Sullivan*

**Disclaimer**

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