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Al Ressler New Center Director

Dear HRM Consortium Associates,

As I make the change from Director to Senior Consultant, I want to pass along some exciting news. Phil Burgess, President of the Academy has selected Mr. Alton (Al) C. Ressler as the new Director of the Academy's Center for Human Resources Management (CHRM). Al transitions to the Center after an outstanding career in federal human resources management culminating in the position of Assistant Director, Office of Human Resources and Statistics, Administrative Office of the U. S. Courts.

Many of you have worked with Al over the years. He is a North Dakota native. He earned a B. S. in Social Sciences in 1969 and an M. A. in political science in 1971. He was also commissioned as a U. S. Army intelligence officer in the same year. Subsequently, Al entered federal civil service where his assignments included senior management positions in DOT and the Army Intelligence community. He was selected by the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) for the Senior Executive Service in 1989 and appointed to his position in the court system in April 1999.

Al has been a key planner and strategist for all aspects of human resources (HR) and other administrative support programs. His associates acknowledge him as a change agent and an innovator in positively addressing the HR management issues in organizations undergoing change. He has been recognized with a number of major honorary and bonus awards including the Presidential Meritorious Executive Rank Award. Importantly, he has been an agency member of the HRM Consortium and knows the issues you face and the importance of working together to identify solutions and to stimulate change.

We at CHRM welcome Al Ressler to the Academy and to the HRM Consortium.

Myra Howze Shiplett

Strategic Human Capital Plan Seminar

On February 13, 2003, CHRM hosted its first HR Professional Seminar during which NASA, DOL and SSA presented their Strategic Human Capital Plans. Each agency has received a yellow on the OMB Executive Management Scorecard for 2002.

Pat Simpkins, an environmental engineer in the space shuttle program, currently serves as the Manager of NASA's HR IT Systems Integration, and as such leads NASA's efforts to devise a strategy for dealing with its 'brain drain.' Pat shared copies of NASA's Strategic Human Capital Plan and talked candidly about getting senior executive support as well as the support of the various scientific and technical professionals in the organization for this effort – Pat described how he made the point that ensuring NASA has the skills it needs for mission accomplishment and that they are properly deployed is not simply an HR initiative. Pat was successful in this endeavor because the goal for NASA is not 'getting to green' but instead, devising an integrated plan for managing human capital.

Jerry Lelchook, an economist by training, currently serves as DOL's Deputy Human Resources Director, and described how DOL has set up a Management Review Board to devise and institutionalize a common management approach (for the 13 agencies that make up the Department of Labor) for key management issues – and the most predominate issue is strategic human capital management. DOL's plan is organized around OMB's 6 dimensions: strategic alignment; workforce planning and deployment; leadership and knowledge management; talent; results-oriented performance culture; and accountability.

Dr. Reginald F. Wells, a psychologist who currently serves as the Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources at SSA, described the human capital planning process that has been ongoing at SSA for several years and the successes it has experienced in de-layering the organization and in reducing its supervisory ratio; in increasing the number of front-line positions available to serve the public; and in its succession planning which includes national leadership development programs, various recruitment initiatives and a campaign to market SSA as an employer of choice.

The Strategic Human Capital Plans and/or PowerPoint presentations for each agency can be found at:
http://www.napawash.org/pc_human_resources/center.html.

Our next HR Professional Seminar will be on April 3, June 6 and July 17. Be on the lookout for the announcement of the topics and for the invitations. These free seminars are sponsored by the HRM consortium agencies and available for their HR professionals.

Disciplining Creativity – A Gateway to Innovation

Being creative can be the gateway to a plethora of innovations. The private industry has, in recent years, fostered the creativity of all their employees and been rewarded substantially with great ideas. In the March 2003 Harvard Management Communication Letter, John Baldoni discusses the issue. He cites such companies as IBM and Kellogg's as companies that have brought their employees together and had them brainstorm about better ways to achieve different goals. IBM gathered many of their employees into one room, giving one individual the task of recruiting others from the room to work on his/her team and to choose a market and interview company representatives on which products they would purchase. Afterward the team would develop a strategy to fund their initiatives. IBM credits the exercise with allowing employees, in very practical terms, to mingle with other employees and to learn how the company functions in other areas. Mr. Baldoni cites three principles to follow in order to maximize innovation and encourage creativity. **First is to make the purpose clear and consistent – and exciting.** It is important to have goals that are well defined and relevant to an employee's everyday work. If the employee can understand how his/her job contributes to the success of the company, then the employee becomes enthusiastic about their work. **Secondly, be certain that communication is open and round up more than the usual suspects.** At a pharmaceutical company in New York, the company periodically holds sessions where the scientists present their findings to a large group of employees, many of whom do not have an intimate understanding of the project. This expands those employees' horizons and creates enthusiasm in the organization. **Lastly, it is imperative to acknowledge any roadblocks and confront them.** Cynicism is the most prominent roadblock. An effective way to confront the cynics is to put employees into groups and have them look at a specific problem and think of solutions. In this situation the cynics voice their opinions and are then asked what their solution would be, which forces them to think positively. The most important thing to do is recognize when things were done right and to celebrate success. That is a tangible way of reaffirming that change and innovation are possible.

Advance copies of Report Two of *The 21st Century Federal Manager: A Study of Changing Roles and Competencies* will be mailed to Consortium contacts during the week of March 10. This report is focused on the First-Line Supervisor: their selection, development and performance management.