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SUBJECT: HR DESIGN NEWS CORNER: MAILBOX FEEDBACK

A. DHS TODAY - FEB 6, 2004

1. SINCE ESTABLISHING THE HR DESIGN FEEDBACK MAILBOX THIS SUMMER AS A CHANNEL FOR YOUR IDEAS AND QUESTIONS, WE'VE RECEIVED VALUABLE INPUT AND SUGGESTIONS ON THE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW HR SYSTEM. YOUR FEEDBACK HELPS US ENSURE THAT THE SYSTEM MEETS THE NEEDS OF DHS EMPLOYEES.

2. AS WE CONTINUE TO MONITOR AND ADDRESS YOUR FEEDBACK, WE'VE NOTICED SOME COMMON THEMES AND THOUGHT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO SHARE SOME OF THEM IN THIS WEEK'S ARTICLE.

3. PERFORMANCE-BASED SYSTEM: A GREAT DEAL OF INTEREST WAS GENERATED BY THE "PAY FOR PERFORMANCE" ARTICLE IN THE DEC. 26 ISSUE OF DHS TODAY. SEVERAL OF THE MESSAGES IN THE FEEDBACK MAILBOX ARE SIMILAR TO THE SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED BY EMPLOYEES IN THE TOWN HALL MEETINGS AND FOCUS GROUPS WE CONDUCTED AROUND THE COUNTRY IN 2003. MANY EMPLOYEES SUPPORT THE CONCEPT OF A PAY FOR PERFORMANCE SYSTEM BECAUSE IT PROVIDES INCENTIVES FOR STRONG PERFORMERS. OTHER EMPLOYEES LIKE THE FAMILIARITY AND PREDICTABILITY OF THE CURRENT PAY SYSTEM. SOME EMPLOYEES FEEL THAT THE CURRENT SYSTEM DOES NOT RECOGNIZE DIFFERENCES IN PERFORMANCE BECAUSE EMPLOYEES GET PAID THE SAME REGARDLESS OF HOW HARD THEY WORK. THEY THINK A PERFORMANCE-BASED SYSTEM WOULD REWARD THOSE EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMERS MORE CONSISTENTLY AND FREQUENTLY. ON THE OTHER HAND, EMPLOYEES ARE CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE FAVORITISM WITH A PAY FOR PERFORMANCE SYSTEM AND WONDER HOW MANAGEMENT CAN ENSURE THE SYSTEM IS ADMINISTERED FAIRLY. THERE ALSO IS CONCERN THAT BUDGET CONSTRAINTS WILL LIMIT PAY INCREASES BASED ON PERFORMANCE.

4. INTEREST FROM STAFFORD ACT EMPLOYEES: A LARGE NUMBER OF QUESTIONS HAVE COME FROM STAFFORD ACT EMPLOYEES, WHO ARE EXCEPTED SERVICE EMPLOYEES OF THE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE ORGANIZATION. THESE QUESTIONS INCLUDE: ARE DISASTER ASSISTANCE EMPLOYEES (DAES) COVERED UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM? ARE THERE PLANS FOR CADRE OF RESPONSE EMPLOYEES (CORE)? WHAT ABOUT DISASTER TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES (DTES)?

5. STAFFORD ACT EMPLOYEES ARE PROPOSED TO BE COVERED BY AN HR SYSTEM SIMILAR TO THE REST OF THE DEPARTMENT.

6. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO STAFFORD ACT EMPLOYEES, PLEASE REFER TO THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES: "[HTTP://ONLINE.FEMA.NET/DHS/NL-ARCHIVES.HTM](http://online.fema.net/dhs/nl-archives.htm) (FOR INFORMATION FROM THE TRANSITIONING NEWSLETTER PRODUCED BY FEMA PUBLIC AFFAIRS)" "[HTTP://CIO.FEMA.NET/RM/DM/IM-ALPHA.HTML](http://cio.fema.net/rm/dm/im-alpha.html) (FOR PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE DISASTER ASSISTANCE EMPLOYEE PROGRAM).

7. PAY, BENEFITS, AND RETIREMENT: THERE ARE MANY QUESTIONS IN THE MAILBOX CONCERNING PAY CUTS OR CHANGES TO BENEFITS AND RETIREMENT, SUCH AS: WILL MY PAY BE REDUCED? ARE MY BENEFITS GOING TO CHANGE? WILL MY RETIREMENT ELIGIBILITY REMAIN THE SAME UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM? WE DO KNOW THE FOLLOWING:

" THERE WILL BE NO REDUCTION IN CURRENT PAY OR BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYEES AS A RESULT OF TRANSITION TO THE NEW SYSTEM.

" THE HRMS WILL NOT CHANGE THE RULES REGARDING RETIREMENT, HEALTH OR LIFE INSURANCE BENEFITS, OR LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS.

8. TIMELINE FOR HR SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION: EMPLOYEES ALSO WANT TO KNOW WHEN THE NEW HR SYSTEM IS GOING TO AFFECT THEM. WHILE THE REGULATORY PROCESS RESTRICTS US FROM PROVIDING SPECIFIC DETAILS AT THIS TIME, WE ARE EXPECTING A PHASED IMPLEMENTATION BEGINNING LATER THIS YEAR. WE'RE PLANNING A PHASED ROLLOUT OF THE SYSTEM TO ALLOW TIME FOR DETAILED FINAL DESIGN, TRAINING, AND CAREFUL IMPLEMENTATION.

9. PLEASE CONTINUE TO SEND US YOUR FEEDBACK. THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S NEW HR SYSTEM ARE SCHEDULED TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER LATER THIS MONTH. FOLLOWING THE PUBLICATION OF THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS, A 30-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD WILL ENSUE AND ALL EMPLOYEES, ALONG WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SUBMIT FORMAL COMMENTS.

10. DETAILS ON THE PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING COMMENTS WILL APPEAR IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER, IN DHS TODAY, AND ON THE DHS INTERNET AND INTRANET SITES. ALL EMPLOYEES ARE ENCOURAGED TO VOICE THEIR THOUGHTS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCERNS DURING THE COMMENT PERIOD.

11. UNTIL THAT TIME, YOU CAN CONTINUE TO SEND YOUR THOUGHTS AND

INSIGHTS TO THE HR DESIGN MAILBOX AT HRDESIGN(AT)DHS.GOV. (PLEASE
NOTE: INPUT RECEIVED VIA THE FEEDBACK MAILBOX IS NOT PART OF THE
OFFICIAL PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS.)

12. INTERNET RELEASE AUTHORIZED.

13. RONALD R. KOGUT, CHIEF, OFFICE OF CIVILIAN PERSONNEL SENDS.

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