⚘EPA INFO ACCESS

Records Network Communications

➲ RECORDS MANAGEMENT TALKS TO UPPER MANAGEMENT
by Michael L. Miller, Agency Records Officer

How many times have we been told in records management texts, that to be successful, a records management program must have the support of upper management? But how to get upper management support is not always so clearly articulated. Most programs that have it, at least the ones I know, either have always had it to some extent or have gotten it the hard way—through some organizational records disaster.

This article is meant to be a primer on how we can get the support we need from upper management. I hope that other records managers (and anyone else with pertinent experience) will

offer additional suggestions that we can print in future issues.

WHO IS UPPER MANAGEMENT AND WHAT IS THEIR ROLE?
For the purposes of this discussion, upper management is defined as Office Director rank (and their deputies) and higher in Headquarters; Regional Administrators and their Deputy or Assistant Regional Administrators, Laboratory Directors in the Office of Research and Development, and others of equivalent rank. Before looking at what we want them to do for us let's look at what we can do for them.

Your initial reaction might be that people at this level have more important things on their minds than records management. The answer is maybe yes and maybe no. Upper management has a number of vital responsibilities, including:
♦ Planning and directing the overall program;
♦ Budget management; and
♦ Preventing or putting out major fires.
To the extent that records management fits into one of these areas,

RM TALKS continued on pages 2-3

VITAL RECORDS

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) issued new revised regulations concerning vital records. The regulations appeared in the June 7, 1995, issue of the *Federal Register*. For more on vital records see the article "Vital Records: Part II" on page 9.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT COSTS

The following scenario uses some basic records management "hidden costs" to illustrate what we are paying out each week to have people file and retrieve their own documents.

According to one recent survey, the average person spends about **40 minutes a day** looking for information he or she can't find. If this same person spends another **40 minutes per week** filing documents (a low average based on research at EPA) that works out to 4 hours per week filing and locating information. That's ten percent of a person's time.

If you use the standard $70,000 a year per employee (salary and benefits) that means that $7,000 per person is spent on records management, or $42,000,000 for the 6,000 employees at headquarters. Even if we estimate the cost per person is only half that figure (in other words EPA is twice as efficient as the private sector) **and** even if improved records management could eliminate only half of the lost time, a savings of over $10,000,000 annually could be achieved through better records management. In terms of FTE, it could mean a savings of 150 at Headquarters alone.

directly related to the effectiveness of its recordkeeping.

PITFALLS OF A POOR RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Records managers need to be able to illustrate specific examples of problems or vulnerabilities that result from poor records management. Here are some examples where poor records management can affect your program adversely:

♦ Failure to locate evidence of activities or transactions that EPA was supposed to have done.

♦ Inability to find information that is critical for decisionmaking.

♦ Loss of proof of ownership, obligations owed and due, or of liabilities.

♦ Failure to document what the Agency knew about an issue at a given time.

♦ Inability to demonstrate a pattern of records management procedures that

records management is an upper management concern. Some examples of how records could interest upper management are:

♦ Records management supports other programmatic priorities such as moving offices, improving customer service, or providing public access.

♦ The potential for significant cost savings. Before promising savings you need hard facts. Getting these figures usually requires conducting a baseline analysis so that you have some idea of the basic costs involved in records mismanagement. These costs are usually hidden in general operating costs.

♦ Avoiding potential vulnerabilities. Some programs have identified poor records management as a vulnerability under the Federal

Managers Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA). Other programs, such as Superfund, have invested heavily in records management because they realize that program effectiveness is

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would support the legal admissibility of records.

- Inability to follow through on enforcement and compliance activity.
- Rulemaking problems caused by lack of documentation.
- Inability to manage records electronically due to lack of policies.

These potential vulnerabilities need to be brought to the attention of upper management before larger problems occur. Conversely, when resources can be saved and risks avoided through improved records management, upper management should also be informed.

What Do We Want from Upper Management?

What records officers most often ask for from upper management is "support," which usually translates into having them go "on record" as supporting the records management program. This can be done via an "all hands" memo, promotion of the program at staff meetings, or agreeing to a specific request for a certain action, for example, conducting an inventory. The more specific we can be about our needs, the better chance we stand of actually getting management support. The best way to get support is to point out the benefits. For example, conducting an inventory will free up space, eliminate potential risk of incomplete files, and provide better public access.

"Hot buttons" vary from program to program so you need to be aware of what your management considers important at any given time. The basic records management principles and tools (life cycle management of records, good filing practices, an inventory of records and information resources, and a solid disposition program) will support most management goals.

Some Dos and Don'ts

- Do try to join forces with other programs in making your pitch to upper management.
- Don't say or act as though records management is dull or unimportant. People may believe you.
- Don't just ask for general "support" for records management—ask for support for a specific project that promises specific benefits.
- Do have specific proposals or examples illustrating the problems and/or opportunities you wish to bring to upper management's attention. (This could take a significant amount of work, but the benefits are worth it.)
- Do recognize that, from upper management's point of view, the records program may, in fact, be working better than other programs that demand more of their attention. ◆

Headquarters Update

Maps, videos, and other non-paper records continue to surface throughout Agency files. If you run into such materials and have questions about how to manage them, please contact Mike Miller at (202) 260–5911 or miller.michael-oirm or the National Records Management Program (NRMP) Support Desk at (202) 260–5272.

Headquarters has been working very hard on the records management support services contract. The NRMP hopes to be back to other issues soon.

The NRMP is currently beginning a revision of the records management manual chapter on disposition. An early draft has been developed and a second one is underway. Anyone who would like to review and comment on the draft should contact Sandy York (contractor) on (303) 840–0464 or york.sandy. The draft will only be sent out via E-mail at this point to keep down paper costs.

ASK DR. RECORDS

Q.

Should EPA records management staff consider becoming Certified Records Managers (CRM)?

A.

The short answer is yes. I have sent in my application to take the first five exams this fall (we'll see if they feel I have enough experience). In my case, I do not expect it to result in any more money in my pocket, but I am firmly convinced that it will force me to learn a lot more about records management, and that will help me do my job better. If you are interested in a career as a records professional, I recommend becoming a CRM. I can provide you with the necessary information. I would note that among the contract staff doing records, I know at least four current CRMs and a number of others are taking the exams. However, there is only one other EPA person I know of who has started the process (Kathy Calvo in Toxics). We'd love some company!

Q.

Why doesn't the NRMP just put out all of its material electronically and forget about paper copies?

A.

We're moving in that direction, albeit slowly. Right now the biggest holdup is that not all records managers have equal access to electronic dissemination tools. We expect that to change. Part of the problem is that we need to ensure that everyone gets the information they need and that means dissemination in a variety of formats. Look for more electronic dissemination (including electronic dissemination of *INFO ACCESS*) in the coming fiscal year. ◆

YOU WANT ME TO BE A RECORDS CUSTODIAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

So what does it mean to be a records custodian? We took an informal poll recently on E-mail asking about the **responsibilities of records custodians** and we received some very good responses. The following are some samples:

◆ Keep up-to-date the maintenance and archiving of records.

◆ Answer staff questions and discuss issues with the Records Liaison Officer (RLO).

◆ Enforce file room and NARA policies.

◆ Coordinate records management activities with the Division records manager or RMO.

◆ Oversee day-to-day management and maintenance of records.

◆ Know record retention periods, recordkeeping requirements, and file cutoff instructions.

◆ Properly handle and guard confidential and sensitive information.

◆ Maintain an accurate file plan.

◆ Be knowledgeable about electronic records.

◆ Schedule and conduct file cleanups.

◆ Assist with review and updates to records disposition schedules and file plans.

These are all great answers! And there are more than we can show here.

The questions speak to one of the biggest challenges in records management at EPA, or at any organization for that matter: that is that every person who works for the Agency is a records custodian. Some people just spend more time being custodians than others.

If you create a document in word processing, enter information into a database, file a document in a folder, answer an inquiry from the public, respond to a FOIA request, or do anything else that documents your activities for EPA, you are a records custodian. You are responsible for ensuring the safety, timely availability, and proper retention and/or transfer of the information in your custody.

In some cases, people have additional custodial responsibilities. For example, someone in your office may have been designated a RLO or a

THE 1995 RECORDS ADMINISTRATION CONFERENCE

NOTES FROM RACO '95

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) held its seventh annual Records Administration Conference (RACO) on May 24. The theme of the conference was "Transitions in Records Management: Expectations vs. Realities". The keynote speaker was Mike Miller of EPA, who talked about how to go about revitalizing a records management program suffering from the "blahs." Mike's speech was entitled *CPR4RM: Breathing New Life into Your Records Program.*

Mike's presentation was followed by a demonstration of a working records management tracking system by Ed Barrese, Records Officer for the Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC). RTC's REMATS software is used to control records at the box, folder, and document level. The software allows for entries at the box level for retirement to the Federal Records Center, but also allows users to enter folder title information within the box and even to identify specific documents within folders when necessary. The software is available free from RTC to anyone who would like a copy.

The final morning session concerned electronic records and their impact on Agency recordkeeping. The two most interesting presentations were by records officers from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE). The BLM presentation was a case study on how records managers were involved in the development of ALMRS, the BLM's legal system for tracking land use and ownership. ACE presented its vision of how it plans to manage large volumes of information, in multiple media, on a national basis using document imaging.

The principal afternoon session of interest to EPA was a panel on downsizing and the implications for records managers. All of the panelists spoke of the need to remember that, while records managers may have to worry about records, most everyone else is worrying about what will happen to them personally. This may create unexpected tensions in the workplace and may critically undermine a records manager's plans. A key piece of advice was to check whether records contacts would be leaving early, either for retirement or new jobs. If so, plan for the additional training needs of the replacements.

NARA presented an overview of what is ahead concerning electronic mail regulations and other publications. The E-mail regulations are due out sometime in July. NARA also has a number of other publications planned. There will be more details when publication dates are firmer.

The final session was on the Government Information Locator Service (GILS) services offered through Fedworld. (*Note:* EPA will be running its own GILS program and will not be using Fedworld.)

If you are interested in additional information on any of the sessions, contact Susan Sallaway (contractor) on (202) 260–5272 or at sallaway.susan on All-in-1. ◆

YOU WANT ME TO BE A RECORDS CUSTODIAN continued

records clerk. This means that person has additional duties related to records management such as maintaining centralized files, retiring records to the Federal Records Center, establishing and organizing file plans, or ensuring records are retained for the appropriate amount of time.

According to the law, we are required to "create and preserve Federal records containing adequate and proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of the agency, and records necessary to protect the legal and financial rights of the government and of persons directly affected by the agency's activities." (44 U.S.C. 3101)

With apologies to Walt Kelly and his Pogo comic—"We have met the records custodian and he is us!" ◆

RECORDS MANAGEMENT—THE LARGER PICTURE: LESSONS LEARNED

This past month, the National Records Management Program (NRMP) staff reviewed a February 1994 report entitled Federal Government Business Process Reengineering: Lessons Learned. *The report was prepared by the General Services Administration's (GSA) Office of Federal Information Resources Management, Planning, and Development staff to assist managers in all agencies as they undertake business process reengineering (BPR) and business process improvement programs (BPI).*

We saw direct comparisons with improvement efforts being made here at the EPA in the records management area. The critical success factors identified in the report are comparable to the success factors that are required in EPA to effectively implement records management initiatives and improvement programs.

The following is a brief overview of some of the more important points in the report. The larger context is also interesting. The work you are doing to streamline the records systems and improve access to EPA records enhances the government-wide movement to improve service to the citizens of the United States.

LESSONS LEARNED IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

There is increasing pressure on Federal agencies to reexamine how they do business and make changes to improve the service they provide to their clients and customers. Federal managers expressed interest in reviewing the lessons learned in other agencies to help them in their efforts. The results were published in the 1994 GSA report, *Federal Government Business Process Reengineering: Lessons Learned.*

The lessons learned were developed by studying examples of client-oriented initiatives underway in various Federal agencies. The following factors were identified as critical to the success of the projects. These critical success factors are the key to any successful project or change in management. We feel that they directly apply to records management (RM) projects at the EPA.

TOP LEVEL MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Top management support in the Federal government is seen as even more crucial than in the private sector because of the need to defend programs both within the Executive Branch and also to Congress. Mike Miller, EPA Agency Records Officer, understands the importance of this point so well that this is the topic for the lead articles in four issues of *INFO ACCESS* this year. Of all the critical success factors in this list, the question of how to solicit consistent top management support to champion records management initiatives is the one that NRMP hears most often.

In a summary of her file plan development work in Region IV that appeared in the April issue of *INFO ACCESS*, Jessica Ruiz (contractor) noted, "there is no substitute for regular contact with managers. Their support is crucial for successful implementation of a Records Management Plan."

LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

Another problem unique to the Federal government is being able to sustain top-level support, as changes in management occur more frequently in Federal agencies than within companies in the private sector. As

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SOME DEFINITIONS

There have been many books written in the past several years defining and outlining the **reengineering and reinvention concepts** being implemented in Federal agencies and private businesses today. Records management initiatives at the EPA fall generally under the definition of business process improvement (BPI). BPI focuses on how to improve an existing process or service, whereas reengineering deals with radical change or redesign in an organization.

EPA records initiatives focus on developing recordkeeping requirements and streamlining processes in order to more effectively and efficiently care for and manage records created by our programs and entrusted to our care.

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outlined in the "Lessons Learned in OSWER" article in the February issue of *INFO ACCESS*, implementation of a file plan is not accomplished overnight. Many other factors, such as the size and complexity of the organization, the number of records and records series, and the current condition of the files and filing systems can all affect the length of time that it takes to implement this project at the EPA. Everyone needs to develop a long-term commitment to RM projects.

HIGH-QUALITY STAFFING

The experiences of Federal managers echo the literature requiring the "best and the brightest" to lead the BPR/BPI initiatives in the Federal government. The importance of keeping committed, well-trained Records Liaison Officers (RLO's) and records contacts in each program, and the increasing emphasis on training and understanding of records management principles is taking root at the EPA. This direction will assist all future efforts at implementing RM initiatives efficiently and effectively.

BUSINESS AS THE DRIVER OF CHANGE

The function and mission of the organization must drive the direction of the project. EPA programs and offices are developing their own inventories and file plans and manuals tailored to fit their mission, the functions of the office, and philosophy of their own program.

SUBSTANTIAL CUSTOMER INPUT

Look at the process from the customer's viewpoint; what do they

need? Customer satisfaction surveys are being conducted by the Air, Water and OSWER Dockets to learn how to better serve their customers. EPA is conducting customer service initiatives in many other areas to fulfill this goal. Additionally, each employee of the Agency is better served if the EPA's records are well organized.

COORDINATION BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS

Be aware of the links with other programs, agencies and people who can assist in your efforts. The Records Management Network and the Docket Workgroup Network have made major strides in the past few years by helping each other, setting standards, sharing information, and learning from each other. The NRMP is also coordinating with NARA and other Federal agencies to identify best practices that might work well at EPA.

APPROPRIATE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The appropriate use of technology is key to achieving the best results. As in EPA records management initiatives,

technology is an enabler, a tool to assist in the effective management of records. Well thought-out applications can greatly improve information management efforts.

GOOD UPFRONT PLANNING

Good planning can ensure proper involvement, anticipate bottlenecks, and help identify the ramifications of project management upfront. The two previous issues of *INFO ACCESS* outlined lessons learned in OSWER and in Region IV. Both articles stressed the importance of good upfront planning; obtaining feedback; understanding the processes being implemented; acquiring management buy-in; and deciding how to set up the file structure. These activities all increase chances of a successful implementation.

NEED TO CHANGE AGENCY CULTURE

People and organizations are resistant to change. Many in the Federal Government are undergoing changes in

NRMP UPDATE

IRM LEGISLATIVE FOUNDATION AND EPA IRM POLICIES

The Office of Information Resource Management (OIRM) has developed two excellent references for IRM Authorities. The first outlines the pertinent IRM Laws, Regulations, Executive Orders, and OMB Policy Circulars affecting IRM at EPA. A scope note is included for each entry, outlining the purpose and intent of the legislation. The second reference provides a short description of the contents of each chapter in the EPA *IRM Policy Manual*.

For more information, or if you would like copies of these items, please contact Susan Sallaway at (202) 260–5272 or sallaway.susan on E-mail.

AROUND THE RECORDS NETWORK

Region 1—Margo Palmer reports that the Region has successfully loaded the records disposition schedules onto their LAN so everyone can access them. The schedules are in their own directory and accessible through the regional help news menu. Users can do a search either by word or schedule series number. Plans are being made to organize the schedules by group so it will be easier to find items applicable to specific programs.

Region 2—Region 2 has recently distributed a new records management manual developed for non-technical staff. The manual includes information on identifying records (and nonrecords), how to prepare records for transfer to the FRC, commonly used records disposition schedules, and other pertinent information. For more information, contact Maria Mendoza.

Region 3—As part of Records Management Day activities, Region 3 put an electronic version of their Records Management Program Handbook on their regional LAN. The handbook includes sections on the purpose and objectives of the records management program; records, nonrecords, and personal papers; records management life cycle; records inventory, records schedules, records disposition procedures; and individual divisional records management programs. More information on the handbook can be obtained from Barbara Brown.

Region 5—The Region 5 Superfund program has instituted a new policy requiring all patrons to leave their personal belongings, such as briefcases and bags, at the circulation desk while they view files. Unfortunately, all reading and research rooms need to seriously consider the level of security necessary to ensure the integrity of their files.

Region 10 RCRA, Region 8's Montana office, and AWBERC in Cincinnati all reported special activities for Records Management Day.

LESSONS LEARNED from pages 6-7

their jobs and work habits. Records management at EPA hasn't always had the attention that it deserved or the focus that it enjoys today. Now that information is increasingly viewed as a strategic asset, we all need to inspire our fellow employees to treat information resources at the EPA with the level of respect we apply to other agency resources such as people, equipment and property. The bottom line is that our jobs will be easier and we will be more productive when we can find better information faster.

There were several other important points made in the report that are relevant to the EPA:

♦ "The biggest challenge to business process reengineering is the implementation. It requires a special set of leadership skills sustained over a long period of time in order to see the process through to successful implementation to reap the rewards of BPR" (p. 2). The same concept holds true for the implementation of a new file plan. Bette Drury (contractor) of OSWER made many of these points in her "Lessons Learned" interview in the February issue of *INFO ACCESS.*

♦ "...experiences have shown that dramatic results from some large-scale reengineering efforts may not be seen for three to five years" (p. 4, John P. McPartlin, "Why Reengineering Runs Aground", *Information Week,* October, 25, 1993, p. 74). Patience is required for success, as well as continued efforts during implementation of the new EPA file plan and other records management initiatives. EPA will reap the benefits of better file organization and the ability to locate needed information in a timely manner, though results may show gradually.

♦ Lack of good communication is one of the top four reasons why projects fail. By using all the vehicles and networks available to us to share records management information and experiences, we can help EPA become a better-organized workplace and a more efficient source of information. ♦

VITAL RECORDS: PART II

NATIONAL ARCHIVES PUBLISHES STANDARD ON VITAL RECORDS

NARA's revised regulation "Management of Vital Records" was published in the June 7 *Federal Register* as a final rule effective immediately. NARA revised the scope of the regulation to limit its application to vital records responsibilities in the context of the larger emergency management program function. The new rule is high-level and direct, and empowers each Federal agency to design a Vital Records Program to match their own needs and missions, within the framework of the definitions in the rule.

There are several revised definitions worth noting:

◆ *Vital Records* mean essential agency records that are needed to meet the operational responsibilities under national security emergencies or other disaster conditions (emergency operating records) or to protect the legal or financial rights of the Government and those affected by Government activities (legal and financial records).

◆ *Emergency operating records* are vital records essential to the continued functioning or reconstitution of an organization during and after an emergency. Included are emergency plans and directive(s), orders of succession, delegations of authority, staffing assignments, and selected program records needed to make the most critical agency operations, as well as

ARMA VITAL RECORDS GUIDELINE

The ARMA vital records guideline suggests that approximately 3 to 5 percent of an organization's total records might be considered vital (Association of Records Managers and Administrators, 1984). The fourth edition of Robek, Brown and Stephens' *Information and Records Management,* (1995) indicates a range of 2 to 7 percent.

One rule of thumb says the longer you have to retain a record, the more likely it is to be vital, yet there are some vital records that have a very short shelf life, such as current payroll records. These may be classed as vital for two or three weeks, and then be replaced or become obsolete information. Vital records may be either active or inactive records, though many records lose their vital quality when they become inactive.

related policy or procedural records that assist agency staff in conducting staff operations under emergency conditions and for resuming normal operations after an emergency.

◆ *Legal and financial rights records* are vital records essential to protect the legal and financial rights of the Government and the individuals directly affected by its activities. These records were formerly defined as "rights-and-interests" records and NARA changed the term to be more precise. Examples could include social security records, payroll records, and retirement records.

Several other points in the new rule should also be noted:

◆ NARA modified the regulation to clarify that it is the informational content, not the form, of the records that must be considered. Where is the needed information most readily available in the event of an emergency? Vital records can be maintained on a variety of media.

◆ NARA modified this rule to allow agencies to store emergency operating records at FRCs under certain conditions. Procedures are outlined in Section 1236.36, *Protection of vital records.*

◆ NARA advised that instructional guides will be prepared for those agencies that want more detail on how to develop a vital records plan that fits individual agency needs. The future publication dates of these guides will be announced as they are determined.

◆ The new rule addresses disposition and cycling of vital records. The length of the retention period does not always indicate that a record is vital. And once a record becomes vital, it does not necessarily stay vital.

After you have had a chance to read the new rule, please feel free to contact Mike Miller, Agency Records Officer, (202) 260–5911 or E-mail miller. michael-oirm with questions or comments. ◆

FINDING AIDS IN HISTORY OFFICE

The History Office staff has been busy surveying historical document collections and periodicals. Finding aids, featuring a scope and content note and a container list, have been prepared for the collections listed below. Other collections will continue to be surveyed and finding aids will be provided periodically to the Headquarters Library. For further information on any of these collections, contact Kathy Kelly (contractor), at (202) 260–2675 or kelly.kathy on E-mail.

◆ Air Pollution and Air Quality Management, 1963–1992

◆ Earth Day/EPA 20th Anniversary [1990], 1970–1991
◆ EPA Employees Recreation Association Newsletter, 1976–1993
◆ EPA Headquarters Telephone Directories, 1971–Ongoing
◆ EPA Journal, 1975–Ongoing
◆ EPA Management and Organization: Budget and Administrative Information, 1970–1993
◆ EPA Office of Research and Development (ORD), Organization and Functions, 1971–1993
◆ EPA TIMES, 1982–1986
◆ Inside EPA, 1989–Ongoing

◆ Oil and the Energy Crisis: The Federal Investigations, 1974–85
◆ Pollution: Major Sources for Research, 1800–1950
◆ State Water Reports through 1940, 15 Titles from 8 States
◆ Noise Control, 1969–1992
◆ Press Releases, 1970–Ongoing
◆ Ruckelshaus Papers, 1970–1984
◆ Toxics Integration, 1977–1993
◆ Transition '89, 1989
◆ Transition '93, 1992–1993
◆ U.N. Conference on Environment and Development [3–14 June 1992], 1990–1993. ◆

AROUND THE RECORDS NETWORK from page 8

Region 10—The Region has started inventorying their records. The ARA sent out a memo to regional staff announcing the inventory. Inventory teams have been established and trained on how to conduct the walk through and how to fill out the inventory matrix. Kate Browder (contractor) prepared information on the records disposition schedules in a tabular format for each division. Some briefings have been done and procedures have been written. The Hazardous Waste Division has almost completed their walk through. The Manchester Lab has also accomplished a great deal.

Region 10 RCRA—Region 10's RCRA records management program celebrated Records Management Day

LET'S HEAR IT FOR . . .

◆ The Superfund Document Management System crew doing the **Region 9** pilot. They received a Bronze Medal for their work.
◆ **Region 1's** Records Program which received NARA's Boston Federal Records Center's Annual Achievement Award for their consistently fine work over the past few years and their care of records scheduled for permanent retention.
◆ **OARM at Headquarters** which has completed its inventory of its eight miles of paper.
◆ The **AWBERC Records Management Program** which has turned out a really nifty brochure advertising their services. The brochure uses color preprinted trifolded heavy paper stock to which the records program added text and graphics. Color makes a lot of difference!

by inviting RCRA staff to a "Jeopardy-style Quiz to Test Your Records Management Awareness and Perspicacity". Answers and questions for the contest were formulated from the regional RCRA Records

Management Guidance and Glossary and hosted by the LABAT DOPO, Mike Slater. Winners were members of the Resources and Analysis Section (first place) and the Compliance Section (second place). ◆

AUDIOVISUAL RECORDS

Throughout EPA, Offices and Programs are planning and implementing the inventory process. Audiovisual records should not be overlooked during the walk-through and should be identified in the physical inventory process.

WHAT ARE THEY?

Examples of audiovisual records that may be found in your program or office are:

◆ photographs, portraits, slides, and viewgraphs;

◆ sound recordings (meetings, news spots);

◆ videos (scientific, presentations, press conferences);

◆ motion pictures and films;

◆ audiovisual finding aids and related documentation.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THEM?

One of the NARA recommendations addresses inventorying audiovisual records in the custody of EPA, with a special emphasis on locating all series of permanent records. Guidance for identifying permanent (as opposed to temporary records) can be found in NARA's handbook *Managing Audiovisual Records*, 1990, (part of NARA's Instructional Guide series. Call NRMP if you need a copy). The
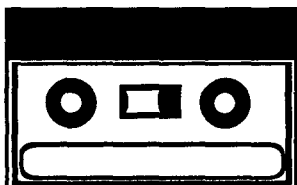
Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR, Part 1232) provides guidance on how to effectively manage an audiovisual program.

Specific dispositions for each audiovisual series have already been identified in the EPA Record Control Schedules (RCS). There are more than twenty RCS for audiovisual records that are found throughout the EPA. The records series (EPA **agency codes** or numbers) applicable to audiovisual records are all found in the low 700's of the RCS list.

Records that are at least ten years old should all be reviewed for transfer to the Archives as soon as possible.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Once older permanent audiovisual records have been transferred to the National Archives, the next agency priorities will be to:

◆ establish appropriate storage and environmental controls for permanent records remaining in EPA custody in order to ensure their long term preservation;

◆ implement a program of regular transfers; and

◆ develop a program for managing audiovisual records across the Agency.

An evaluation of audiovisual records management across the Federal Government and recommendations for improving management of audiovisual records can be found in NARA's *The Management of Audiovisual Records in Federal Agencies: A General Report.*

STATUS OF NARA REVISIONS TO A/V RECORDS GUIDELINES

Audio and videotape records have been discussed often recently on listservs, in **Ask Dr. Records,** among the Records Network, and at the NRMP. We called Bill Murphy, one of NARA's specialists in audiovisual records, to find out the latest NARA guidelines. For now, he advises records managers to continue to follow the Federal Records General Schedules and the applicable sections in the *Code of Federal Regulations* (36 CFR, Part 1232 and 1228.184).

Mr. Murphy stressed that EPA offices and programs should convert any records that have not already been transferred onto professional formats (e.g., BetaCam, Super VHS, D1, or High 8). The commercial consumer formats (like audio cassettes and VHS) limit the ability to preserve the information for any sufficient length of time. His advice is to "make wise choices up-front, as you are creating the records. For example, whenever possible use open-reel for audio recordings that will become records."

Murphy mentioned that NARA is in the process of revising two sections of the CFR. 36 CFR, Part 1228.184 identifies items for transfer to the National Archives and 36 CFR, Part 1232 provides guidance on how to manage audiovisual records and describes good audiovisual records management procedures.

Look for these revisions to be published for comments in the *Federal Register* by the end of next quarter. ◆

MANAGING PESTICIDE REGULATORY FILES

The Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) celebrated the first anniversary of its new LAN-based regulatory file tracking system on April 21. This new system, "JACKETS," has resulted in enormous savings for OPP, especially in terms of staff time and in increased efficiency in the management of OPP's regulatory files. OPP registers all pesticide products used in the United States. Each product has a regulatory file, called a "jacket," containing the history of that product, including administrative documentation, correspondence, Confidential Statement of Formula, labeling, and technical information. There are currently over 50,000 jacket files. Because the jacket contains the master record for these products, including confidential information, and is the only copy maintained, strict circulation control and protection of each jacket is essential.

Prior to 1989, the jackets were managed by nine individual product teams in the Registration Division. Each team had its own method for managing its jackets. Most of the jackets were located in one room and security was a problem since access to the files was not controlled. With this decentralized system, files could not be located in a timely manner and without a tracking system in place, files were easily misplaced when they were circulated between different work groups.

In 1989, the Registration Division consolidated management of the collection into one OPP File Room. Circulation control was achieved with a computerized system based on barcode technology. Barcodes were assigned to the jackets, file room shelves, and to the borrowers. This first generation computerized system was a significant step toward better tracking of these jackets.

In 1990, the File Room was transferred to the Document Management Section in the Information Services Branch Program Management and Support Division, where it remains today.

Since then, the scope of the collection has been expanded from product files to other types of regulatory files. Services expanded from simple location checks to inventory and management reports, batch retrievals, courier services, and more. Soon experience in the management of this collection, coupled with its expansion, pointed to the need for an enhanced tracking system.

At the same time, OPP was developing a growing reliance on its LAN, making this system a perfect candidate for migration to the LAN.

Since the system ran on one standalone PC, with a second backup PC, many hours were spent each day backing up the primary files to the second machine. A large portion of the operation was still manual: requests for jackets were submitted in paper and keyed in by File Room staff and

feedback to requesters was handled by phone. Delays were the norm.

As a first step, the primary system files were moved to the LAN and made accessible by the two File Room computers. This was an overnight success—automatic backup and concurrent access by File Room staff. Each staff member was provided his or her own computer, increasing productivity and the speed of customer service.

Design of a new LAN-based system, which would be available to all OPP staff, began. On April 21, 1994, the new "JACKETS" system was phased in with the conversion of data from the old system and staff began processing transactions under the new system. During the summer, product managers in two separate buildings began testing the system. Refinements were made until September when the system was offered to all OPP staff.

The new system can be accessed by anyone on the OPP LAN. Files can be borrowed by those with CBI clearance who are assigned a barcode. Borrowers request jackets from their terminals and automatically receive notice electronically when the request is ready.

In addition to requesting jackets and tracking their location—whether in the File Room, at the Federal Records Center, or in the hands of a borrower— this system is much more flexible in managing the jackets. Reports, which were previously not possible, allow a

much more refined level of performance monitoring.

Other aspects of records management have been incorporated, such as the capturing of information on the retirement and disposition of tracked files—date retired, accession and box numbers, and destruction information. Retired jackets can also be requested and, once retrieved, their circulation tracked, replacing the paper-based system of the past.

Data integrity has been improved through a number of edit checks and through a link to three major LAN-based systems—one which verifies CBI clearance and two which maintain status of products and regulatory actions.

This link between the core systems is a significant stride in the direction of system integration, making reliable information available easily and quickly. These links provide an authoritative method for verifying borrowing privileges and instantly verify product status, allowing early discovery and reconciliation of discrepancies between these systems.

Since the introduction of this system, paper requests have been eliminated, staff time has been reduced by half, accuracy and management options have increased, and most important, customer satisfaction has soared. Enhancements will always be on the drawing board as the system matures.

For more information contact Clare Grubbs, Chief of the Document Management Section, at (703) 305–7460 or Donna Garner at (703) 305–6474. ◆

DOCKET WORKGROUP UPDATE

At the May meeting, Darryl Adams, OPPE, shared valuable information about the Regulation Writers training classes. Darryl explained the process of developing a regulation at the EPA. He discussed where the Docket comes into play in the process, outlined the regulatory workgroup's responsibilities, and provided ideas about where to most effectively insert instructions for Regulation Writers into the *Docket Guidance*. The Docket Workgroup is currently in the process of rewriting the *Uniform Rulemaking Docket Guidance*, which will be included as a section of the *Regulation Writers Training Manual*.

NARA's NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

The May 1995 issue of NARA's newsletter, *The Record*, includes a good article outlining the goals and strategies of NARA's 1995 Strategic Plan. The challenges range from technology and access issues to process improvement. NARA is in their third year of strategic planning. The Strategic Plan has evolved. It includes a vision and provides a framework to ensure that NARA can accomplish its goals. The focus is on planning products, services and new ways to access the information contained in Federal records into the 21st century.

NARA's mission statement is as follows:

> *The National Archives and Records Administration serves the American people and their government by safeguarding their interests in Federal records and other documentary materials, by promoting effectiveness and efficiency in the administration of those materials, and by advancing the knowledge of the history of the Nation.*

ATTENTION

NRMP has begun to develop draft *Agency File Guidance* on the most commonly utilized EPA schedules. We would appreciate your feedback. Contact Susan Sallaway if you would like to review a copy. Call (202) 260–5272 or sallaway.susan via E-mail.

INTRODUCING CIPS

More than 700 customers have given up filling out the Optional Form 11 when requesting records from the Federal Records Centers (FRC). Have dire consequences resulted from this willful disregard of proper procedure? Not quite. In fact, these rebellious souls receive their records more quickly, with greater accuracy, and with less paperwork than everyone else.

No, they don't have relatives working at the FRC, but they do have access to the **Centers Information Processing System (CIPS)**. This online, interactive electronic system gives Federal agencies a link to the NARS-5 database on the NARA mainframe computer in St. Louis, MO. The NARS-5 database contains the most up-to-date location information for all FRC holdings.

In addition to eliminating the need to send requests by fax, courier, or mail, CIPS automatically inserts correct location information in the electronic reference request when the accession and box numbers of the request are provided. This avoids many of the negative replies that formerly resulted from changed locations at the FRC.

If you would like to turn in your stack of OF-11s and sign on to CIPS, you will need an IBM-compatible computer with a modem and communications software. Contact your nearest Records Liaison Officer (RLO) for the hardware and software details.

Note: Harold Webster, HQ Records Officer, demonstrated CIPS at the 1995 EPA Technology Showcase, held May 2–4 in Washington, DC. ◆
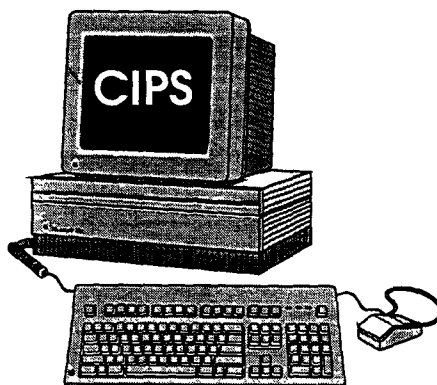
## FROM THE "WHY WE NEED TO FIND WAYS TO BE PAPERLESS" DEPARTMENT

Electronic document filing systems help to stem the flood of paper that threatens to inundate many offices, but evidence suggests that paper documents constitute a tidal wave that has yet to crest. A study commissioned by the Association for Information and Image Management made some startling estimates of paper document production.

On a *daily* basis, U.S. companies create approximately:
◆ 2.7 billion sheets of file folder contents
◆ 234 million photocopies
◆ 76 million letters
◆ 21 million general paper documents

IN THE AUGUST ISSUE...

◆ Selling RM to Management

◆ Notes from the 1995 Records Conference

◆ Lessons Learned during the OA Inventory.

◆ Vital Records (Part 3)

◆ RM Collection

◆ Contact List Update
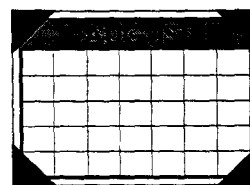
TECHNOLOGY CORNER

The acronym URL stands for Uniform or Universal Resource Locator. URL is a standard used by the World Wide Web (WWW) to link information located worldwide. The URL for WWW documents contains four parts:

1. Protocol
2. Internet name and port
3. Document path
4. File name

For example: http://ua1vm.ua.edu/crispen/crispen.html

This is the URL for an HTTP-accessible document called crispen.html located on the ua1vm.ua.edu (University of Alabama's computer) in the directory / crispen.

Note: **Do try this one at home!** This is a good address for **Internet lessons by E-mail**. Patrick Crispen, an economics student at Alabama, developed an introductory Internet training course consisting of 27 short, plain-language tutorials that you get via E-mail.

LISTSERV ADDRESS CHANGE

Here's a note to those interested in the Recmgmt Listserv—the address has changed! If you would like to be added to the list, please send your request to listserv@listserv.syr.edu with the message: subscribe recmgmt (your name, omit parenthesis). If you would like to dropped from the list, please send your request to the address indicated above with the message: unsubscribe recmgmt.

WORDPERFECT "FIND FUNCTION" FOR FILES

To search through the current list of files for a specific name or text, press (F) Find, (4) Entire document. At the **Word Pattern:** prompt, type the text of your search. If you're searching for words that are next to each other in the document, type the text in quotes, such as "Cost Recovery Records." If you don't use quotes, WP will find the documents containing those words anywhere—not necessarily next to each other. Press (Enter) and WP

searches through your files. When the search is complete, you are left with a directory listing of *only* those files containing the specified text. If the directory is empty, no files were found that matched search criteria. From this directory listing, you can look at a file, retrieve it, or press Exit (F7) to return to your document.

DID YOU KNOW?
How much disk storage would you guess the average manager of a large LAN is buying these days?
A gigabyte every other week, according to consultant Michael Peterson of Strategic Research Corp., Santa Barbara, California.

He said that this represents a growth rate of about 35 percent a year, despite the fact that many of the sites that store inactive files report that "no more than 2 percent of the repository ever gets looked at again."

Additionally, it's a costly solution. Storage costs about $1 per megabyte to configure and about $7 per gigabyte to support. Backing up each server on tape costs an average of $75,000 a year and must be done properly to be reliable.

Peterson's advice is to consider all solutions. Recentralize storage on a dedicated server—PC, jukebox, or tape library—but not on just one of anything. File catching, redundant disk arrays, server and file mirroring, and hierarchical storage management are all techniques that boost data availability and cut down on waste and human intervention. ◆

ANNOUNCEMENT

The next Records Management Council Meeting will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on July 13, 1995, in the IMSD Conference Room, near Mike Miller's office.

The following meeting will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 29, in a location to be announced.