



JANUARY 2012



President proposes significant government reorganization

President Obama on Friday announced he is seeking authority from Congress to reorganize federal trade and business-related functions in the Commerce Department and other organizations, as well as elevate the Small Business Administration to Cabinet status.

Speaking to a group of small business owners at the White House, Obama said, "Today, I'm outlining changes we could make if Congress gives the green light to allow us to modernize and streamline. These changes would help small business owners like all of you."

Obama said six agencies focus on business and trade. "In this case, six isn't better than one," he said. "With the authority I am requesting today, we could consolidate them all into one department with one website, one phone number and one mission -- helping American businesses succeed."

The White House said the plan, the result of nearly a year of consultation with agencies and private sector leaders, would save up to \$3 billion over 10 years. Between 1,000 and 2,000 jobs could be eliminated, but the reductions would take place through attrition.

Obama said that Congress in 1984 had removed the executive branch's authority for reorganization -- "a generation ago," in a time when there was no Internet, he noted. He expressed hope that this Congress would see this effort to bring government into the 21st century as a bipartisan effort.

For the complete story, please go to

http://www.govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=49764&dcn=e_GEBreaking.

Courtesy of [GovExec.com](http://www.govexec.com), January 13, 2012

• **USDA to close hundreds of offices**

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack unveiled a plan Monday to overhaul and streamline the department's operations, an effort that will involve closing hundreds of USDA installations around the country.

Under the plan, known as the Blueprint for Stronger Service, the department will close 259 domestic offices, facilities and labs in the United States, and seven foreign offices. They include the following closures:

- Farm Service Agency will consolidate 131 county offices in 32 states.
- Foreign Agricultural Service will close two country offices.
- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service will close 15 offices in 11 states and five offices in foreign countries.
- Rural Development will close 43 area and sub-offices in 17 states and U.S. territories.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service will close 24 soil survey offices in 21 states.
- Food Safety and Inspection Service will close five district offices in five states.
- Agricultural Research Service will close 12 programs at 10 locations.
- Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services unit will close 31 field offices in 28 states.

Agriculture officials said that many of the offices slated for closure are no longer staffed or have very small staffs. They said the consolidation of offices, along with other actions, would save about \$150 million each year.

For the complete story, please go to <http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0112/010912usda-closures.htm?oref=relink>.

Courtesy of [GovExec.com](http://www.govexec.com), January 9, 2012

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2012 Retirement Seminars:

CSRS

February 22-23	Open
May 23-24	Open
August 14-15	Open
November 14-15	Open

Location:

Gus Solomon Courthouse
620 SW Main St., Room 101
Portland, OR 97205

FERS

March 6-7	Open
June 13-14	Open
September 5-6	Open
December 4-5	Open

Location:

See Oregon FEB website,
at www.oregonfeb.us

Federal Employees - \$125
Non-Federal Spouses - \$75

Register:

www.oregonfeb.us

Questions:

ofebtraining@oregonfeb.us

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Education and Training

- **Oregon FEB leadership video series returns**

The Oregon Federal Executive Board is proud to announce the return of last year's successful Leadership Development video series. This program, designed for new to mid-level federal managers or those interested in management, features local leaders primarily from federal agencies who share their insight into how they pursued their career path and the primary challenges they have faced.

Last year the Oregon FEB produced eight of these 30-minute videos, which can all be found at www.oregonfeb.us. The interviews initially started out as webinars, but due to limited live participation they have since evolved into videos only, posted online for viewing at your convenience. This format has been popular, with some earning over 200 views.

The 2012 series will begin with a video produced on February 21st featuring Nora Rasure, Deputy Regional Forester of the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region. On February 28th the Oregon FEB will record an interview with John Patrick, Director of the Portland Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

The completed videos will be uploaded and announced through the Oregon FEB's website and email distribution list within 24 hours of production.



John Patrick, Director,
Portland VA Medical
Center.

Federal Benefits and the Workforce

- **Oregon FEB schedules full year of Retirement Seminars**

The Oregon FEB has released the entire calendar year 2012 schedule for their popular FERS and CSRS Retirement and Estate Planning Seminars.

Nationally recognized benefits expert Loretta Ellis continues to lead the full-day retirement session, while an attorney from the local law firm Dunn Carney Allen Higgins & Tongue leads the half-day estate planning segment.

Four for each system will be conducted at regular three month intervals, starting with a CSRS session next month. The complete schedule can be found on page 1 of this newsletter in the right hand column, or on the Oregon FEB website at www.oregonfeb.us. The CSRS seminar locations are the same, but the FERS classes vary, so check the website for details.

Registration is conducted through the Oregon FEB website. The cost remains \$125 for federal employees and \$75 for non-federal spouses. For additional questions, contact the Oregon FEB at ofebtraining@oregonfeb.us.

- **White House to propose 0.5% pay increase**

The Obama administration will propose a 0.5 percent salary increase for civilian federal employees in its fiscal 2013 budget proposal, the Washington Post reports. The paper says two senior administration officials with knowledge of budget plans confirmed that the proposal would be included.

Federal employees are currently under a two-year pay freeze. A 1.6 percent raise for military service members recently went into effect, and recipients of Social Security benefits got a 3.6 percent cost-of-living allowance this year.

It may be difficult to get approval for the federal employee pay raise on Capitol Hill. Late last year, the House passed a bill that would have extended the current payroll tax cut for a year and partly financed it through a longer salary freeze for federal employees and lawmakers, along with a requirement that both groups contribute more to their government pensions. The Senate's version of the legislation did not include those spending offsets. In the end, Congress opted only to extend the payroll tax cut for two months.

Washington-area lawmakers and a handful of other Democrats criticized plans to reduce federal employees' compensation to help pay for the tax cut. The White House, however, remained mum on the issue.

Courtesy of GovExec.com, January 6, 2012

Combined Federal Campaign

- **2011 Pacific NW CFC tops \$1.6 million**

The 2011 Pacific Northwest Combined Federal Campaign will soon close its books on what has been deemed a satisfying campaign in a difficult fundraising climate. To date \$1.627 million has been pledged, 93.7% of what was raised in 2010 – this in an environment in which some agencies are looking at deep cuts in budgets and personnel this year and beyond.

While one campaign concludes, another begins as local charity applications for the 2012 campaign have just been posted on the Pacific NW CFC website, at www.yourcfc.org. Applications will be accepted from February 10 – March 9. They are then reviewed by a committee of local federal employees to verify qualifications. Any federal employee interested in serving on the Local Federal Coordinating Committee review panel should contact Ron Johnson at rjohnson@oregonfeb.us or 503-326-2060.



- **“Rose Guardian 2012” exercise taking shape**

The Oregon Federal Executive Board, in partnership with FEMA Region 10, is gearing up for their spring emergency preparedness exercise, “Rose Guardian 2012.” Subtitled “March Madness,” this year’s event is going to be a blast, so to speak.

This annual functional continuity exercise is intended to help local federal agencies test their abilities to continue operations during a disaster. The simulated scenario is a hazardous materials spill, which will release dangerous chemicals into the atmosphere, leading to significant evacuation and transportation gridlock.

Participating agencies will be asked to go to their alternate work sites and/or implement their telework plans, while testing their continuity of operations plan, essential functions, communications and alert notification systems, and ability to access vital records.

The primary exercise will be held on **March 21, 2012**, with an interagency hotwash, or exercise review, the following day. A Planning Conference, which will unveil details about how the exercise unfolds, will be conducted **January 26th** at the GSA Federal Building in Portland. For more information, go to www.oregonfeb.us/ofeb_eppages/RG12_Desc.html.

- **FEMA brings Continuity Planner’s Course, Reconstitution Workshop to Portland**

FEMA Region 10, in partnership with the Oregon Federal Executive Board, is bringing two training opportunities to Portland next month for federal employees with emergency management responsibilities.

From **February 6-8, 2012**, the Continuity Planner’s Train-the-Trainer Course will be held at the Gus Solomon Courthouse in downtown Portland. Intended for program managers at the federal, state, local, and tribal levels of government, this course is designed to provide the skills and knowledge to further develop and improve the overall quality and workability of Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plans. See the flyer at www.oregonfeb.us/ofeb_docs/EPdocs/FEMArX_L550COOPPlanners_2-12.pdf.

Quickly following, on **February 9, 2012**, a Reconstitution Workshop will be delivered at the same location. This class will assist continuity and reconstitution managers to develop effective and comprehensive reconstitution plans for their agencies. See the flyer at www.oregonfeb.us/ofeb_docs/EPdocs/FEMArX_ReconstitutionWorkshop_2-12.pdf.

To apply, submit a completed [FEMA form 119-25-1](http://www.fema.gov/forms/119-25-1) to Erin Ward at Erin.Ward@fema.dhs.gov via email or fax. Tuition to this course is free; however, the employee’s office, directorate or region is responsible for all travel costs associated.

- **CREW hosts earthquake forum and webinar**

The Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup (CREW) is hosting a public forum and webinar entitled “What Tohoku Teaches us about Cascadia,” **Wednesday, January 25th**, from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. in the White Stag Building in downtown Portland.



This free forum features speakers who will address issues impacting our region based on what has been learned from Japan’s Tohoku earthquake and tsunami last year. Speakers include: Dr. Althea Rizzo, Geologic Hazards Program Coordinator at the Oregon Office of Emergency Management; Dr. Chris Goldfinger, Professor of Marine Geology who received his PhD in structural geology from Oregon State University; and Kent Yu, PhD, Principal and Branch Manager for Degenkolb Engineers in Portland. The presentation will be broadcast simultaneously as a webinar at <http://pdx.uoregon.edu/index.php?p=webcast>.

CREW is a coalition of private and public representatives working together to improve the ability of communities throughout the Cascadia Region to reduce the effects of earthquakes and related hazards. For more information, go to www.crew.org.

- **National Weather Service expects colder, wetter winter in Pacific Northwest**

At the December meeting of the Oregon & SW Washington Crisis Continuity Coalition (C3), Andy Bryant of the National Weather Service, Portland Office, shared the upcoming winter weather forecast the Pacific Northwest: bundle up.

He began by explaining that the range of high and low temps in the Pacific Northwest typically don’t vary that much. But the outlook through February is for cooler than normal temperatures and more rain than usual. A big snow year overall is not expected in Western Oregon, but some snow in the valleys should appear.

While the public often hears about either El Niño (unusually warm temperatures) or La Niña (colder temps and wetter conditions), conditions are not always one or the other; they can also be neutral. However, back to back La Niñas, the prediction this year, are not that unusual.

There are many weather analysis tools available to the public, at www.weather.gov/portland. There are also mobile weather alerts that can be subscribed to from <http://inws.wrh.noaa.gov>.



Calendar of Events

JANUARY 2012

26th	Oregon & SW Washington Crisis Continuity Coalition (C3)	9:00 am – 10:00 am	Location: GSA Federal Building 911 NE 11th Ave., Conf. Room C, Portland 97232
26th	“Rose Guardian ‘12” Planning Conference	10:00 am – 2:30 pm	Location: GSA Federal Building 911 NE 11th Ave., Conf. Room C, Portland 97232

FEBRUARY 2012

1st	Shared Neutrals Board Meeting	9:30 – 11:30 am	Location: Conference Call
6th-8th	FEMA L-550 Continuity Planners Workshop	8:30 am – 4:00 pm	Location: Gus Solomon Courthouse 620 SW Main St., Room 101, Portland 97205
9th	FEMA Reconstitution Workshop	8:30 am – 4:00 pm	Location: Gus Solomon Courthouse 620 SW Main St., Room 101, Portland 97205
21st	Oregon FEB Leadership Video – Nora Rasure, Forest Service	TBD	Location: To be accessed via the Oregon FEB website, at www.oregonfeb.us .
22nd-23rd	CSRS Retirement & Estate Planning Seminar	8:30 am – 4:00 pm 8:30 am – 12:00 pm	Location: Gus Solomon Courthouse 620 SW Main St., Room 101, Portland 97205 Cost: \$125 Feds, \$75 Non-Fed Spouses
28th	Oregon FEB Leadership Video – John Patrick, VA Medical Center	TBD	Location: To be accessed via the Oregon FEB website, at www.oregonfeb.us .

MARCH 2012

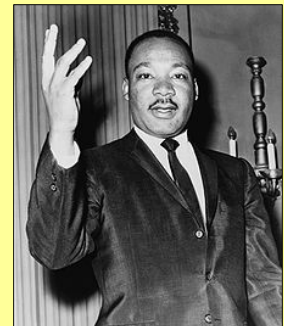
6th-7th	FERS Retirement & Estate Planning Seminar	8:30 am – 4:00 pm 8:30 am – 12:00 pm	Location: Portland Building 1120 SW Fifth Ave., 2nd Floor C, Portland 97204 Cost: \$125 Feds, \$75 Non-Fed Spouses
8th	Oregon FEB Policy Committee	1:30 – 3:00 pm	Location: TBD
21st	“Rose Guardian ‘12” Functional Continuity Exercise	9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Location: Participating agency alternate worksites
22nd	“Rose Guardian ‘12” Interagency Hotwash	12:00 – 1:00 pm	Location: Gus Solomon Courthouse 620 SW Main St., Room 101, Portland 97205

Go to the Oregon FEB Calendar on our website and click on an item for more details.
Registration info for all classes can be found at www.oregonfeb.us.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, January 16th, 2012

“Make it a Day On, Not a Day Off!”

During the 1950s and '60s, civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. recognized the power of service to strengthen communities and achieve common goals. Initiated by Congress in 1994, King Day of Service builds on that legacy by transforming the federal holiday honoring Dr. King into a national day of community service grounded in his teachings of nonviolence and social justice. The aim is to make the holiday a day ON, where people of all ages and backgrounds come together to improve lives, bridge social barriers, and move our nation closer to the “Beloved Community” that Dr. King envisioned. Go to <http://www.mlkday.org/> to find out how you can get involved.



Courtesy of the Corporation for National and Community Service

Committee Reports

Policy Committee

Next Mtg: *March 8, 1:30 pm*

The December meeting swore in FY2012 Chair Carol Maartense, District Manager of the Social Security Administration, Eugene, and Vice-Chair Lynn Voigt, State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency. Also included was a review of the FY2012 Oregon FEB Operating Plan, summaries of the 2011 CFC and a video celebrating the 50th anniversary of Federal Executive Boards.

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Pacific Northwest Combined Federal Campaign

Next Mtg: *TBD*

Congratulations to Bill Abadie, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the new 2012 Pacific NW CFC Chair, and thanks to Cynthia Maltsberger, DHS-CBP, for her service as Chair in 2010-11. The Pacific NW CFC has wrapped up, raising over \$1.6 million. Local charity applications for the 2012 CFC are now available at www.yourcfc.org.

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Crisis Continuity Coalition (C3)

Next Mtg: *Jan. 26, 9:00 am*

The January C3 meeting will be an abbreviated one, leading into the "Rose Guardian '12" Exercise Planning Conference immediately following. At the meeting, the U.S Army Corps of Engineers will discuss flood damage reduction efforts, local federal telework plans will be reviewed, and FEMA will share an update of their activities.

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503-414-7774

Shared Neutrals/ADR

Next Mtg: *Feb. 1, 9:30 am*

Shared Neutrals honors the retirement of an icon; Diane Williams of the U.S. Forest Service, a long-time member of the Shared Neutrals Board, completed over 30 years of federal service on Dec. 30, 2011. Thank you, Diane! Maria Mondragon-Davis of the Forest Service takes her seat on the Board. The Shared Neutrals program managed 54 cases in calendar year 2011.

Contacts:

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Trent Stewart
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Oregon FEB FY 2012 Chair Carol Maartense, District Manager, Social Security Administration, Eugene.

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FY 2012 Policy Committee:

Chair

Carol Maartense
Social Security Admin., Eugene

Vice-Chair

Lynn Voigt
Farm Services Agency

At-Large Members

Bill Abadie
Army Corps of Engineers

Clara Conner
Federal Highway Admin., WFLD

Celeste Davis
HHS/Indian Health Service

Camron Doss
General Services Admin.

Colonel John Eisenhower
Army Corps of Engineers

David Ferguson
Transportation Security Admin.

Gregory Fowler
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Roy Fox
Bonneville Power Admin.

Captain Daniel L. LeBlanc
Coast Guard MSU Portland

Mike Lloyd
IRS, Office of Chief Counsel

Cynthia Maltsberger
Customs & Border Protection

Hugh Morrison
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

John E. Patrick
Portland VA Medical Center

Andy Smith
Bureau of Land Mgmt.

Trent Stewart
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Chair

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HHS/Indian Health Service

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2012 Chair

Bill Abadie
Army Corps of Engineers

Shared Neutrals/ADR:

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