

# HR SOLUTIONS

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## HR INTEGRATION: THE DIVISIONS NEW LOOK

In September of 2003, Governor Murkowski tasked the Division of Personnel with the development and implementation of an enterprise-wide human resource system. The Division was given four primary objectives:

- ◆ Standardize HR policy and practice within the Executive Branch
- ◆ Implement enterprise technology systems and tools to improve service delivery
- ◆ Increase operational efficiency
- ◆ Reduce administrative costs

The Division was reorganized into 6 major units, based on program area. The units include Management Services, Equal Employment Opportunity, Technical Services, Classification, Training & Development, and Employee Services. In addition, the division has an administrative support section in the Director's Office.

Next, the Division split the Executive Branch into five service centers:

- ◆ Transportation & Public Facilities
- ◆ Health & Social Services
- ◆ Resources (includes Natural Resources,

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Over the course of the last ten months the State of Alaska's Executive Branch human resource community has transitioned from fourteen separate programs with a centralized policy arm, to a single entity providing the full range of human resource services. Staff in the Division of Personnel have been challenged to learn to work together in new team environments, to seek consistency and best practice in providing service to client agencies, and to adjust to new ways of doing business while making the transition as seamless as possible for our clients. I believe the DOP staff have made a tremendous effort to meet these challenges head on and to excel in turbulent times. I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank them for pulling together as a team and making every effort to make the HR Integration a success.

I also want to thank all of you outside the division who have taken the time to point out the glitches in our system so we can make course corrections, who have given positive feedback to our staff when deserved, and who have worked with us in a myriad of ways to make the HR integration successful. Thank you. Working together we can achieve our goals of superior HR service delivered in a consistent and cost effective environment.

DOP is entering the next phase of our integration. To a large extent our major transitions are over and program areas are settling into routines; business as usual so to speak. I have asked the DOP staff to resist resting in the routine and to strive for ways to continually improve their individual contributions and to help improve the overall success of the division. DOP is committed to continue to reach for efficiencies, to identify areas where we can improve our service, and to look for the ways we can partner with our clients to help provide them with responsive solutions to the human resource problems they face.

In the next few months you will see a push to articulate, measure and improve the level of service we offer our client agencies. The DOP Program Managers will be working with the Administrative Solutions Team (comprised of Administrative Services Directors) to establish client service standards and to define what we need from our clients in order to provide the levels of service they need to effectively operate their programs. I expect these to be productive conversations and that this process will strengthen and create more effective partnerships with our client agencies.

## HR INTEGRATION: THE DIVISION'S NEW LOOK CONT.



**The Leadership Team:** Back row, from left to right; Jackson Steele, Lee Powelson, Steve Rice, Maritt Miller. Front row, from left to

ment, Community & Economic Development, Revenue, Labor & Workforce Development)

On October 16, 2003, all human resource staff and activities were transferred to the Division of Personnel and organized by function and service center rather than by agency. The Division's make-up went from 40 to approximately 180 personnel.

The HR Integration has made fundamental changes to human resources in the State of Alaska Executive Branch, most notably:

- ◆ Movement from a department centered operational model to an enterprise model
- ◆ HR staff who are tasked with making decisions and implementing systems in the best interest of the State as a whole
- ◆ Rethinking virtually all the basic principles and methods by which the HR services of the state have been delivered.

Fish & Game, Environmental Conservation)

- ◆ Public Protection (includes Corrections, Public Safety, Military & Veterans Affairs)
- ◆ General Agencies (includes Administration, Law, Education & Early Development)

*“The HR Integration has made fundamental changes to human resources in the State of Alaska Executive Branch...”*

### MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR CONT.

We need to hear from all of our clients. Your feedback helps us know we are on track. If you experience problems or superior service, we want to hear from you. You can contact any Program Manager with your feedback or you can contact me directly. There is also a Customer Service button on our home page. The e-mails generated from that button

go directly to the Director's inbox and are responded to promptly. Please take the time to let us know how we are doing, your feedback does make a difference!

Mila Cosgrove  
Acting Director of Personnel

### MEET THE MANAGEMENT SERVICES PROGRAM MANAGER

Mila Cosgrove has worked in the human resource field for 20 years. Her background includes executive recruiting, classification & compensation, employee relations, training, organization development, research & analysis, and labor contract administration and negotiations from both the management



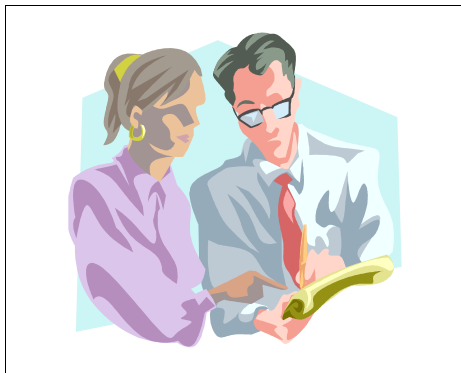
**Mila Cosgrove**

and union sides.

Ms. Cosgrove is certified as a Senior Human Resource Professional by the Society for Human Resource Management.

# MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The Management Service Consulting teams are the first point of contact for supervisors and managers who need assistance in dealing with personnel, employee/labor relations or organization design issues. Human Resource Consultants coach supervisors and managers through human resource issues providing advice, consultation and where appropriate direct services. Another critical role of the management service consultant is to provide direct links to other staff areas within the Division of Personnel. If you are unsure of who to contact within the Division of Personnel, your management services consultant will connect you to the right person to assist you.



**Your First Point of Contact for Human Resources.**

The Management Service Consulting teams are staffed by experienced human resource professionals who have varied backgrounds in all functional areas of human resources; employee/labor relations, classification, recruiting, organization design, and payroll. Their diverse backgrounds allow them to assist managers and supervisors with a variety of issues and to provide creative solutions and resolutions to workforce issues. Management Service Consultants should be contacted for information concerning the following types of personnel and employee relations issues:

- Identification and problem solving related to any human resource issue impacting your program or the workforce employed in your program area.
- Employee performance management including; developing performance expectations, advice on performance improvement plans, coaching on communicating to employees who have performance issues, performance appraisal reviews and appeals.

- Advice on developing layoff plans.
- Discipline including investigations of employee misconduct, assistance with drafting letters of discipline, and assistance in representation meetings with employees and union representatives.
- Labor Relations including grievance investigation and response, contract modifications, grievance resolutions, contract interpretation, and arbitration or litigation support.
- Employee Relations including drug testing issues, human rights complaints, employee complaints, development of work rules, ethics issues, nepotism concerns, ADA accommodation requests, harassment or discrimination complaints, and policy and procedure review.
- Organization development and reorganization including advice in drafting position descriptions, potential impact of reorganizations on work units, and other issues related to the effects of organization structure on position classification. Please note: Management Service Consultants do not perform position classification duties, these are handled in the classification section.

The Management Service Consulting teams are allocated between the five service groups: Transportation & Public Facilities, Health & Social Services, Public Protection, Resources, and General Agencies. Staff are located in Juneau, Anchorage and Fairbanks.

**Management Services Team Leaders:**

**Transportation & Public Facilities**

Judy Porter  
465-6956

**Health & Social Services**

Chip Parr (Acting)  
465-1638

**Public Protection**

Kim Peterson  
465-5490

**Resources**

Joel Casto  
465-2438

**General Agencies**

Sharon Dick (Acting)  
465-2498

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Training and Development program provides professional supervisory, management, leadership, EEO compliance, and interpersonal skills training courses. Courses are offered on an open-enrollment (scheduled), special session (request), and customized basis. Training & Development staff is also available for training and performance development consultation.

The Training and Development program follows a yearly schedule that includes a full offering of open enrollment classes from September through mid June. The remaining months of the year are used for developing new course materials and for making adjustments to existing classes. In FY05 the Division of Personnel expects to offer new classes in Interpersonal Skills and Change Management. The Effective Inter-

viewing and Hiring class is also being modified to allow for more hands on practice in interviewing skills. The FY05 open enrollment schedule should be posted by August 15<sup>th</sup>.

With the advent of human resource integration, there is no longer a per capita charge for classes. You can view course descriptions and schedules on the Division of Personnel home page: <http://dop.state.ak.us>. Once you've identified a course you would like to attend, you can register on-line through our web based enrollment system;

TrainAlaska.

To request enrollment in a DOP course, access TrainAlaska at:

**[dop2.state.ak.us/trainalaska](http://dop2.state.ak.us/trainalaska)**

- Use the Student Tools page to complete a profile—or, if you have a profile, to log onto the system.
- Use the course schedule to select the course, location, and date that best meets your learning needs.
- Request enrollment in your selected course. Your supervisor receives an email notification and request for approval.
- If your supervisor approves, your enrollment is confirmed by email and

you are placed on the class roster.

- If your supervisor does not approve enrollment, you are notified by email.

You may also use TrainAlaska to:

- View your personal transcript for a list of classes you have taken or requested.
- Nominate a substitute for a class in which you are enrolled but cannot attend.
- Cancel your enrollment in a class.

*“In FY05 the Division of Personnel expects to offer new classes in Interpersonal Skills and Change Management.”*



## ACADEMY FOR NEW SUPERVISOR'S A SUCCESS!

Employee attendance and feedback clearly indicate that the five-day Division of Personnel **Academy For New Supervisors** is successful and effective. The course was written in late 2003 to provide new supervisors with a comprehensive learning opportunity focused on learning the knowledge necessary to comply with applicable federal and state law as well as understanding statewide policies and procedures that guide their day-to-day activities. Supervisors also learn core supervisory and management skills such as the One Minute Manager goal setting and feedback skills. The course learning module focused on interpersonal skills is very popular.



The pilot course was delivered to 24 supervisors in Juneau in November 2003. Since then, nearly 200 supervisors have attended the Academy beginning with the January 2004 field-test delivery in Fairbanks. The course has been delivered five times in Anchorage, three times in Juneau, and once each in Seward and Ketchikan.

Student feedback has been almost exclusively positive with strong indications that the course learning objectives are on target for the basic knowledge and skill needs of the course design target population: new supervisors within the first year of appointment. Student feedback also strongly indicates that seasoned supervisors find the course well worth their investment in time and effort. Indeed, course participants who were skeptical about investing five days in a classroom have consistently reported that the course was well worth the investment in time.

The course will not be delivered in July or August, however the new 2004/2005 open enrollment schedule will be posted on the Division of Personnel Training & Development web site by late August.

Division of Personnel employees Tyler Andrews, Pam Day, Tim Parker and Jackson Steele are certified to deliver the academy and would be pleased to answer questions about the course.

*“Student feedback  
has been almost  
exclusively  
positive...”*

### MEET THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM MANAGER

Jackson Steele has nearly ten years experience as a telecommunications customer service and sales supervisor and manager. He has over twenty years experience in the public and private sector as a leadership and diversity consultant, performance consultant, certified trainer and training manager.

Jackson has over twenty years of experience in course development and delivery in leadership and management skills including diversity, coaching, conflict



**Jackson Steele**

resolution and problem solving, change management, all aspects of performance management, labor relations, and interpersonal skills. He has developed and delivered courses on adult and accelerated learning theory and application, learning needs analysis, course development, and course delivery and facilitation. He is a successful and effective teambuilding and conflict resolution facilitator.



## EEO PROGRAM UPDATE

In March 2003 Governor Murkowski issued an Executive Order assigning responsibility for the State's Equal Employment Opportunity Program (EEOP) to the Division of Personnel (DOP). The EEOP is working to redevelop the program to ensure the State is in compliance with various State and federal laws. To reaffirm the Governor's commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Affirmative Action (AA), the EEOP Manager has developed an Administrative Order (AO) to be issued by the Governor that will combine the elements of AO 59, 75, 81 and 195 into one comprehensive order. This includes the State's EEO/AA policy statement, procedures and one streamlined internal complaint procedure.

In the arena of EEO/AA, the section will develop the methodology for the State's Affirmative Action Plan, incorporate new census data, determine areas of underutilization of minorities and women, address the underutilization through affirmative action steps, and implement the plan. On the federal level, the new census data has been incorporated into workforce utilization analyses for all newly prepared federal EEOP and EEO/

AA plans for specific departments or divisions of the State. Both State and federal plans require monitoring and auditing of employment practices.

The staff from the EEOP is partnering with Employee Services staff for minority outreach in employment. The development of a minority outreach program focusing specifically on outreach to the Alaska Native Community is under development. Participation in Job Fairs and other cultural events will be a part of the outreach efforts.

The investigative staff in the Anchorage EEOP office will work closely with the Management Services section of the division to respond to formal complaints of discrimination. As liaison to the enforcement agencies, EEOP staff is responsible for identifying potential liability and making recommendations on either settling the issues early or in defending the state's actions. In an effort to streamline the process and assist Management Service Consultants, managers and supervisors in investigating and responding to complaints, a new investigative plan has been developed as a tool to focus the investigation on the elements of the case.

*"Participation in Job Fairs and other cultural events will be a part of the outreach efforts."*

### MEET THE EEO PROGRAM MANAGER

Penny Beiler has worked for the State of Alaska for 28 years, primarily in the civil rights and human resources areas. While an Affirmative Action Officer for the University of Alaska, Penny completed a degree in business. Following her 7 1/2 years at UAF, Penny worked as an Investigator and Director for the Alaska State Commission on Human Rights in Fairbanks and later as a Constituent Relations Specialist for the Office of the Governor. After moving to Juneau Penny was the Director for Boards and Commissions in the Governor's office, a trainer for the Department of Labor HR office, a Human

Resources Manager for the Department of Education and Early Development before moving back into the EEO field with DOP. Penny received her professional certification from the International Personnel Management Association in 2000 and successfully renewed the certification in 2003.



Penny Beiler

# STATEWIDE PLANNING AND RESEARCH

The Statewide Planning and Research (SPR) team provides strategic planning services to executives, managers, and human resource professionals within the state system. These services include workforce planning, quality assurance and best human resource practices research and analysis.

The SPR Team also responds to ad hoc information requests regarding the State of Alaska Workforce from other government agencies, private sector firms, and the general public. Between July 1, 2003 and April 1, 2004 the SPR team responded to 199 separate research or data requests; that's over 1,230 staff hours (equivalent to 164 7.5 hour days) in an 8 month period.

Statewide Planning & Research also produces the Workforce Profile. The workforce profile is published semiannually, and reports current and historical statistics, notes trends and provides a snapshot of the State's human resources for perspective. The profile is located on the Division of Personnel's web site under the "quick links" section on the Statewide Planning & Research home page.



Listed below are the employment statistics for the Executive Branch workforce based on data gathered from the payroll system as of the end of the 2003 calendar year.

On December 31, 2003, there were 14,582 permanent Executive Branch Employees; 13,148 full-time employees, 152 part-time employees, 1,282 seasonal employees

Over half of the employees work in 3 departments: Transportation 21 %, Health & Social Services 20 %, Fish & Game 10 %

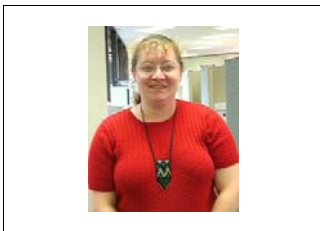
As of December 31, 2003, 70 % of Executive Branch employees work in the three largest cities: Anchorage 36 %, Juneau 24 %, Fairbanks 10 %

The three largest unions represent three fourths of Executive Branch employees: Alaska State Employees Association represents 53 % as the General Government Unit, Alaska Public Employees Association represents 12 % as the Supervisory Unit, Public Employees Local 71 represents 11 % as the Labor, Trades and Crafts Unit.

*"...provides strategic planning services to executives, managers, and human resource professionals within the state system."*

## MEET THE STATEWIDE PLANNING AND RESEARCH TEAM LEADER

Amanda Holland has worked in the human resource field for fourteen years. Her experience includes recruitment, classification, payroll and benefits, employee relations, labor relations, and policy and procedure writing.



Amanda Holland

Amanda has a degree in industrial psychology and two years of research experience with an industrial psychology consulting firm whose clientele included many Fortune 500 companies.

## EEO PROGRAM UPDATE CONT.

All new cases filed will have a plan developed by EEOP staff, prior to forwarding the information for investigation.

The major goals of the program are to build a solid, defensible program for the State and to ensure that the State's liabilities are protected. Within the next

year, the manager will be working on development of regulations for the program. The EEOP will continue to develop and offer training and assistance to DOP staff and to the State's managers and supervisors clarifying their roles and responsibilities in the EEO/AA area.

## EMPLOYEE SERVICES

Employee Services is your Workplace Alaska recruitment contact. Staff is assigned by service center, with a primary contact for each department, and is available to advise managers and supervisors on recruitment and selection techniques and procedures as well as to post vacancies on the State's online recruitment system and to approve hires.

Employee Services also administers re-employment and absence management programs, including:

- ◆ WorkFirst, a proactive program dedicated to minimizing the impact of injury or disability on employees and on the State of Alaska.
- ◆ Injured Worker, a program designed to assist former state employees injured on the job to regain state employment
- ◆ ADA, Americans with Disabilities Act
- ◆ Family Leave



Employee Services is responsible for the maintenance of employee personnel records and operates the Employee Call Center.

The Employee Call Center is a new service provided by the Employee Services Section of the Division of Personnel and is available to Executive Branch State of Alaska employees, with the exception of AMHS employees. The Employee Call Center is responsible for providing a wide range of information and referral services to new and current employees.

Phone: 907-465-3009

E-Mail: [employeeccallcenter@admin.state.ak.us](mailto:employeeccallcenter@admin.state.ak.us)

Hours: 8:00 - 5:00; Monday - Friday

Contact the Employee Call Center when you have questions about employment matters, such as:

- ◆ Personnel information
- ◆ Probationary periods
- ◆ General Family/Medical Leave information
- ◆ Rehire/transfer rights
- ◆ Worker's Compensation
- ◆ Payroll Information
- ◆ Range, step and salary of positions
- ◆ Leave balance information
- ◆ Leave base dates
  - ◆ Leave eligibility dates
  - ◆ Leave cash-ins
  - ◆ Leave without pay
  - ◆ Mandatory leave
  - ◆ Military leave
  - ◆ Holidays
  - ◆ Step placement
  - ◆ Basic information about

State of Alaska benefits (PERS/TRS, SBS, health insurance)

- ◆ Contacts for Division of Personnel
- ◆ How to locate forms such as:
  - Benefit forms
  - Beneficiary changes
  - Address changes
  - Direct deposit
  - W-4

Please Note: Due to the specific nature of the Alaska Marine Highways (AMHS) contracts, the Employee Call Center is not currently set up to answer calls from AMHS Vessel employees. AMHS Vessel employees should continue to call their payroll contact with employment related questions.

Employee  
Call Center  
465-3009

### MEET THE EMPLOYEE SERVICES PROGRAM MANAGER

Pam Day has worked for the State of Alaska in the human resource field for 12 years. She was Human Resource Manager for the Department of Natural Resources and is a certified instructor for the Academy for New Supervisors.



Pam Day



## TECHINICAL SERVICES

Technical Services personnel are the first point of contact for operational and administrative staff who need assistance or advice regarding personnel/payroll processing. You can contact the Technical Services Supervisor in your service center for assistance on the following types of personnel/payroll issues:

- ◆ Range, step and salary of positions
- ◆ Probationary periods
- ◆ Merit anniversary dates
- ◆ Evaluation reminders of due dates
- ◆ Leave balance information
- ◆ Leave without pay
- ◆ Seasonal leave without pay
- ◆ Military leave
- ◆ Alaska Family Leave Act (AFLA) and the Federal Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- ◆ Leave base dates
- ◆ Workers Compensation
- ◆ Employment actions, including appointments, separations, transfers, demotions, promotions
- ◆ Timesheets and leave slips
- ◆ Updated telephone and fax numbers for the State of Alaska Employee Directory
- ◆ Address corrections
- ◆ Information and forms for State of Alaska



Benefits (PERS, SBS, Health Insurance)

- ◆ Required personnel forms for hiring, terminations, change of address, electronic deposit, etc.
- ◆ Agency personnel files for current employees
- ◆ Alternate Workweek Agreements
- ◆ Extensions of non-permanent positions
- ◆ Extensions of acting status
- ◆ Notice of Pay Problems
- ◆ Grievances and complaints regarding pay issues

Technical Services has been working with agencies on two enterprise initiatives: the Personnel Action Request Form and standardized timesheet elements. Both initiatives are targeted for implementation in the first half of Fiscal Year 2005. The Personnel Action Request Form (PARF) is a standard form that will be used statewide to request personnel actions such as appointments, transfers, separations, etc. It is designed to simplify the process of notifying Technical Services of upcoming actions for supervisors and employees. Likewise, by standardizing timesheet elements statewide, Technical Services is simplifying the time reporting process and improving consistency in processing payroll. More information on both initiatives is available on the DOP web site under the Technical Services link and in HR Update articles.

*“Technical Services has been working with agencies on two enterprise initiatives...”*

## MEET THE TECHNICAL SERVICES PROGRAM MANAGER

Maritt Miller has over 23 years of payroll, recruitment and employee relations experience with the State of Alaska. She began her career with the State of Alaska in the summer of 1980, working as a Clerk Typist II in the Department of Health and Social Services. The next summer she returned to Alaska and the Department of Health and Social Services as a Clerk Typist III and was promoted to a Clerk IV position with the Department of Health and Social Services before accepting a promotion as a Personnel Assistant in the Office of the Governor. In 1985, Maritt transferred to the Department of Fish and Game and served as a Personnel Assistant, Personnel Specialist and Personnel Officer. She was promoted to the Human Resources Manager position in the Department of Revenue in

June, 2003.

Maritt currently serves as the Technical Services Manager for the Division of Personnel. Maritt and her husband have one son in college, one son in high school and a daughter in middle school.



Maritt Miller

## IT SPOTLIGHT

IT Spotlight is designed to keep you informed about what's happening in the Information Technology (IT) section, including information on the status of various completed, in progress and pending projects that may have an impact on you (and hopefully the impact will be positive). Look for future articles with tips on how to better use your PC or the computer systems you use daily and for a "Q&A" section.

Listed are some of the projects IT has completed in the last few months:

- ◆ PD Tracker – the online system for tracking the status of Position Descriptions as they are processed in the



### Classification Section

- ◆ Issues Tracking System – the online system for tracking the status of ongoing issues in the Management Services Consulting Teams
- ◆ Grievance Filing System development and testing
- ◆ PD On-line design; development has begun

Of course for most IT related projects, the work is never truly done. IT constantly looks for ways to improve the Division's computer services and increase its usefulness and/or productivity.

Look for information about these ongoing enhancements in future articles.

*"IT constantly looks for ways to improve the Division's computer services.."*

## MY PHONE BOOK

The Division of Personnel recently added a new option to the Personnel web site. "My Phone Book" allows you to create and print your own phone book using information taken directly from the State of Alaska directory service. You can customize the phone book and show as little or as much information as you would like.

The system is for use by State of

Alaska employees, which means that you can log in to use MyPhoneBook with your LDAP username and password. For most employees, this is the combination you use to log into your State e-mail.

The IT section is currently developing a PowerPoint introduction to help you get started using MyPhoneBook.

## MEET THE IT PROGRAM MANAGER

Steve Rice has twenty-five years of experience in the Information Technology field. He has worked for the State of Alaska for over 23 years, joining the Division of Personnel Team in 2001.

Steve moved to Juneau in 1978 relocating from Ohio. He worked as an IT Consultant for two Juneau based IT firms in the 80's. His first position with the State was with Department of Administration, Division of Information Services (now known as Enterprise Technology Services (ETS)) as an Analyst/Programmer I. Seventeen of his twenty-three years with the state were spent with the Department of Health and Social Services. In 1983, he worked as an Analyst/Programmer III with Health &

Social Services, Division of Family & Youth Services (now Office of Children's Services). In 1984 he was promoted to an Analyst/Programmer IV, and in 1989 was promoted again to an Analyst/Programmer V.

Steve has a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, with a double minor in Management Information Systems (MIS) and Psychology.



Steve Rice

# CLASSIFICATION

The Classification and Pay Section operates on the principle of “like pay for like work.” The Classification staff provides professional reviews, analyses, recommendations and final actions on substantive classification and compensation matters. Classifiers also assist and advise agency management and operational staff in these areas.

All Classification professionals attend the week-long Classification Academy and then develop areas of expertise in a variety of job classes. The staff is primarily involved with job analysis and position classification, creation and maintenance of job class specifications, establishing minimum qualifications and assigning pay grades to job classes.



Division of Personnel classifiers conduct studies independently or as members of a collaborative work team. Studies typically involve the following steps:

- ◆ Identification of the issues to be addressed
- ◆ Collection and analysis of job information such as duties and responsibilities, reporting relationships, and skill requirements
- ◆ Structuring of job classes and job class series
- ◆ Collection and analysis data concerning internal alignment
- ◆ Preparation of written analyses and recommendations
- ◆ Allocation of affected positions

## PD TRACKER

Working together, Classification and IT created PD Tracker, an online system supervisors, managers and employees can use to monitor the progress of individual classification actions. You can use PD Tracker to see when Classification received your Position Description, where it is in

the classification process and which classifier has been assigned to its review.

Classification and IT are now working on the online Position Description tool in the near future.

*“Working together, Classification and IT created PD Tracker.”*

## MEET THE CLASSIFICATION PROGRAM MANAGER

Lee Powelson has served as the Classification Manager since 2001. His prior state experience includes five years as Human Resource Manager for the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, six years as a state negotiator and Labor Relations Analyst, and a year as a Research Analyst for



Lee Powelson

Health & Social Services. He also worked for eight years as a negotiator and employee representative for the Alaska Public Employees Association.

Lee has a degree in Economics and is a member of the Society for Human Resource Management.

## ADMINISTRATION

The Administrative Services Section handles the Division's business and financial affairs – budget development, financial management, accounting, procurement of goods and services, human re-



sources (internal), clerical support, and management of property, space and records.

### MEET THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES PROGRAM MANGER

**Sarah Brinkley** serves as the Administrative Manager for the Division of Personnel (DOP). She brings to the position over fifteen years of administrative and managerial experience in Alaskan municipal and State government, with a particular emphasis in budget development and fiscal management. In DOP, her chief current challenge is orchestrating the consolidation of the Division's Technical Services staff, which the Division predicts will re-



Sarah Brinkley

sult in various efficiency gains and will pave the way for standardization of payroll functions across agencies. Outside of work, Sarah's main preoccupations are family, writing, gardening and cooking.

### FYI

#### HR Update

HR Update is the Division of Personnel's semi-monthly newsletter designed to keep you informed about developments in the HR arena. Published on the 1st and 16th of every month, HR Update is distributed electronically to all Administrative Managers, Administrative Services Directors, and others as designated by departments, and posted on the DOP website.

HR Update keeps you informed about changes in HR policies and procedures--new forms, Personnel Rule revisions, changes in interpretations--as well as the services available to you and your agency through DOP.

HR Update is available online at [dop.state.ak.us/index.php?id=144](http://dop.state.ak.us/index.php?id=144) This web site can also be reached from the DOP home page by choosing "Newsletters" under Quick Links.

#### State Vehicles Have Tax Consequences

The State is changing its practices to comply with IRS regulations that regard commuting between the employee's home and work as personal use of a state vehicle and a taxable benefit to the employee. This is true regardless of whether the employer directs the employee to take the vehicle home.

If you have any questions or require clarification of this information, please contact Lisa Pusich, State Accountant.

Additional information is available online (HR Update – FY 04 \* Issue 3) [dop.state.ak.us/index.php?id=144](http://dop.state.ak.us/index.php?id=144) This web site can also be reached from the DOP home page by choosing "Newsletters" under Quick Links.

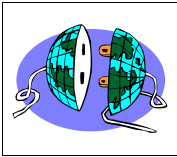
*"HR Update is the Division of Personnel's semi-monthly newsletter designed to keep you informed."*

## SUPERVISORS CORNER

You've probably heard it first hand. Perhaps you've said it yourself. Maybe you've seen it surface in an employee satisfaction survey.

There's not enough communication around here!

Ask any employee anywhere in the universe, and it's safe to say that they'll point to "a lack of communication" as a big improvement opportunity in their workplace. This person might be getting five informational e-mails a day, ten major memos a week, and two in-depth briefings each month. But it still comes up as the apparent holy grail: We need more communication!



The fact is, rarely are people referring to communication in the sense of e-mails, memos, and meetings. They're hinting at something deeper and more important -- something that can't be discerned from a quick comment or a survey checkmark.

So what are they really saying? Here are a few possibilities:

- ◆ Our workplace is divided by status and rank, and I feel like a second-class citizen.
- ◆ When I ask the same question to two managers, I get two very different and conflicting answers.

- ◆ My job is seen by management as being unimportant.
- ◆ People don't value my opinion.
- ◆ Management is trying to hide something.
- ◆ There's a serious lack of trust in our workplace.

The next time you hear that "there's not enough communication around here," don't take the comment at face value. Put on your Sherlock Holmes hat and begin to ask questions. "What do you mean by communication?" "Where exactly is communication breaking down?" "What are some of the other issues that relate to this?" "How is this impacting your work?"

Questions like these will help you uncover the real story -- and stop you from "solving" the problem by sending more e-mails and memos.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tom Terez is a speaker, workshop leader, and author of 22 Keys to Creating a Meaningful Workplace. His Web site, BetterWorkplaceNow.com, is filled with tools for building a great work environment. Write to Tom@BetterWorkplaceNow.com or call 614-571-9529.

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*"there's not  
enough  
communication  
around here,"*

## RETIREMENT & BENEFITS

In October of 2003, the Division of Retirement and Benefits Anchorage field office was restructured to provide only counseling services to retirement system members in the Anchorage area. All other processes were transferred to the Juneau office. With this restructure came a new mission and focus for the office.

The mission of the two benefit counselors is to provide benefit education services to members and employers in the Anchorage area by providing:

- \* General seminars. Seminars are open to all PERS employees in the Anchorage area, not just State employees. Because seating is limited, the seminars are supplemented with group meetings at job sites.
- \* Group meetings at job sites. These are smaller meetings covering either general or specific topics. Supervisors have input into the subject of these meetings; and
- \* One-on-one counseling sessions. Counseling sessions are conducted in the Anchorage office

by appointment only or can be set up to occur during job site visits. Members may also set up a teleconference with a Juneau counselor by calling 1-800-821-2251.

The Anchorage Retirement and Benefits Counselor, Peter Fisher, will be contacting State offices in the next few weeks to make arrangements for group meetings and/or counseling sessions on-site at State employment locations. This is an opportunity for employees to learn about their Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), Alaska Supplemental Benefits-Annuity Plan (SBS-AP) and Deferred Compensation Plan benefits and how to maximize them. Understanding the benefits provided with State employment will aid in the retention of qualified employees.

**Supervisors should encourage their staff** to attend group meetings or seminars while maintaining adequate staffing levels. Employees attending benefit education meetings do not have to submit a leave slip to do so.

*"Supervisors  
should  
encourage  
their staff,"*



## ARBITRATION AND CASE LAW BRIEF

Digests of State of Alaska arbitration decisions and other employment case law decisions will be presented in each issue of the newsletter. Selected cases are presented to provide the opportunity to learn from the experience of others. To learn more about the principles and issues illustrated in these digests please call your Human Resources Management Service Consultant. Release of the full text of State of Alaska arbitration decisions is restricted by AS 39.25.080.

### Demotion for Cause Overturned Contradictory Message from Management

Employer took action to demote a supervisor for cause. Management launched an investigation into employee allegations that the supervisor was hostile, disrespectful and abusive to employees in the workplace and that he/she did not follow proper record keeping procedures. The supervisor admitted to using foul language and telling obscene jokes in the workplace. An audit of the supervisor's record keeping substantiated the allegation of poor record keeping.

A review of the supervisor's performance appraisals during the arbitration revealed repeated praise for her/his leadership, sense of humor, and record keeping. The supervisor's performance appraisals were consistently rated "high acceptable." The arbitrator stated that the appraisals and the employer's failure to seek evidence contradictory to the allegations were critical flaws in the employer's case. These flaws caused the arbitrator to reduce the penalty to reprimand and reinstate the supervisor to his/her previous duties. The supervisor had over six years of service at the time of the disciplinary action.

*Key Issues: The contradiction between the employee's performance appraisals and the employer's allegations undermined management's ability to take necessary action to correct the supervisor's behavior. Unclear performance feedback cannot effectively communicate to the employee what behaviors are to be avoided or in the*

*case of good performance what behaviors to repeat. The remedy: discuss the acceptable performance standard with the employee, get their agreement to meet the standard and follow up with coaching and accurate feedback.*

### *Times Have Changed*

#### Indirect Threat of Violence, Dismissal

Employees reported to management that a coworker stated: "If I get fired. I will kill someone here." The subject employee was under investigation for unexplained absences from work. A personnel investigation was initiated and the subject employee was interviewed with union representation. The personnel record of the subject included: counseling and training resulting from harassing comments to female employees about their ability to perform work; a reprimand for a physical confrontation against his supervisor that required physical restraint; and behavior restrictions requiring subject's separation from a family member employed at the same location. Investigation revealed a second statement by the subject employee that "I would rather kill someone else (at work) than commit suicide," when asked about being upset with conditions at work.

At no time did the subject make a violent threat directed at a specific person or office. Troubles at home were offered as an explanation for the subject's behavior. The union described the incident as isolated and subject to progressive discipline.

In upholding the employer's dismissal the arbitrator recognized two specific issues: a change in society and a continuum of progressively violent behavior. He recognized that the employer has an obligation to provide a safe place of business for employees and members of the public. In a world of calculated and random acts of violence including terrorism and school shootings, the arbitrator recognized that the employer can no longer gamble that a progression of violent behavior will self correct.

*Key Issues: The employer responded early to instances of unacceptable behavior. Further, the employer kept records of the responses to the subject's be-*

*"An audit of the supervisor's record keeping substantiated the allegation of poor record keeping."*



## ARBITRATION CASE LAW BRIEF CONT.

*behavior. A timely investigation was initiated when witness memories were fresh. Without documentation, the employer would not have been able to show the continuum and may not have been able to take the needed action. The employer had good witnesses with creditable stories and memories.*

### *False Statement Results in Dismissal*

Workplace Alaska Applicant Certification is for Real

After two years of acceptable service an employee was dismissed for claiming false education credentials on his/her Workplace Alaska Job Qualification Summary. Subject employee applied for state employment answering, "yes" to a screening question specifying a college degree. All applicants holding a degree were granted an interview for the open position. During the selection process the subject employee provided a cover letter and answered interview questions all confirming that she/he held the required degree. The subject employee was selected as the successful candidate and provided the required Workplace Alaska Certification. In paraphrase the certification states: "Information I have entered is true to the best of my knowledge. If I enter false information I may be removed from my job."

The subject employee achieved permanent status receiving appraisals rating his/her work as "acceptable" and recommending "continued employment." A new supervisor was appointed in the subject's 18<sup>th</sup> month of service. Immediately, the supervisor began in-



teracting with the staff, assigning tasks and following up on the completion of those tasks. Follow up with the subject showed that he/she had failed to complete a writing project assigned by the previous supervisor. The subject employee's difficulties caused the supervisor to reassign the work to another employee.

The supervisor believed that an employee holding the appropriate educational requirements should have been able to complete the writing assignment. Personnel files were requested by the supervisor for all direct reports. A review of the subject employee's file documented the appropriate degree. Confirmation with the educational institution listed in the subject's file revealed that he/she did not have the degree claimed.

In upholding the dismissal the arbitrator recognized the notice contained in the certification as sufficient to warn a potential employee of the consequences for dishonesty in entering information on the application. He determined that the subject's dishonesty led to a job interview and later selection.

*Key Issues: Immediate initiation of a performance management relationship with the existing employees by the new supervisor provided information that revealed that the subject could not complete specific tasks. The supervisor's attempt to diagnose the performance problem revealed the critical lack of necessary knowledge and skills associated with education. Without the signed certification, the notice to the subject employee could have been flawed and may have retarded the employer ability to take action with a dishonest employee.*

*"The supervisor's attempt to diagnose the performance problem revealed the critical lack of necessary knowledge and skills associated with education."*

## MEET THE AUTHOR

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Current duties include: Chief Spokesperson in collective bargaining negotiations for the State of Alaska, trainer delivering management classes to supervisors throughout the State, course developer, investigator and management consultant to various client agencies.



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