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Subject: Cabinet Report for the Week of August 16, 2004

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Cabinet Report

For the Week of August 16, 2004

**Office of Cabinet Affairs
August 13, 2004
456-2572 (EEOB)
456-0165 (WW)**

**TOP ITEMS
FOR THE WEEK OF AUGUST 16, 2004**

- ***DHS Senior Officials Exercise in Washington, D.C.***

On August 19, the Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness will conduct the fourth DHS Senior Officials Exercise in Washington, D.C. The exercise is designed for DHS principals, deputies, or senior department management to examine the Homeland Security Advisory System and focus on the processes, procedures, protective measures, and the impact associated with elevating the threat level to “Red.” The exercise will employ two scenarios that address chemical and improvised explosive device attacks. The exercise is closed to press.
- ***Changes to the Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System.***

On August 16, the *Federal Register* will publish a proposed rule titled, “Medicare Program; Proposed Changes to the Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System and Calendar Year 2005 Payment Rates.” This proposed rule updates the prospective payment system used by Medicare to pay hospital outpatient services. The rule provides for an increase in Medicare payments to hospitals for outpatient services of 4.6 percent, or \$864 million. The rule also implements provisions of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003, including payment for an initial preventative physical examination and several policy changes. Hospitals are expected to react favorably to the rules since payments increase for every category of hospital.
- ***Potential Limits on Chicago O’Hare Flights to Reduce Delays.***

As early as August 17, the Department may issue an order establishing a cap on the number of flights into O’Hare International Airport in Chicago, Illinois, in an effort to alleviate severe flight delays. Significant on-time performance problems caused by over-scheduling are causing ripple effects throughout the entire civil aviation system. Discussions between the Department and airlines serving the airport are ongoing. A related public comment period ends on August 13.
- ***Department to Award \$10 Million to Nine New Development Projects.***

This week, the Department will announce the selection of nine projects totaling \$10 million to develop the U.S. oil and gas resources and protect the environment. The new projects will address issues that currently restrict domestic oil and gas production, support development of new technologies, and explore more efficient and environmentally responsible oil and gas production. The nine projects concentrate on two primary areas – access to resources on Federal lands and the management of produced water, which is the largest waste stream associated with oil and gas production.
- ***Bureau Of Land Management (BLM) to Act on Otero Mesa Leasing Decision.***

On August 17, the BLM will announce its plan to allow fluid mineral leasing in southeastern New Mexico. This decision culminates a six-year planning process. While opening new areas for exploration, the plan includes significant environmental protections. Of the entire two million acre planning area, there can be a maximum of only 1,600 acres of surface disturbance at any given time resulting from energy development activity. Governor Richardson (D) and environmental groups strongly oppose this action.

PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATIONS

- *State of Florida: Tropical Storm Bonnie and Hurricane Charley.*
 Issued August 13. Major Disaster Declaration for Public Assistance, Individual Assistance and Hazard Mitigation.

KEY SPEAKING AND TRAVEL ENGAGEMENTS

Date	Location	Audience / Event	Speech
<i>Secretary Abraham</i>			
16 August	New York, NY	Lehman Brothers; Morgan Stanley	Tour; Meetings; Roundtable Event
19-22 August	London, England	Barclays Capital; Chairman of Uranium Enrichment Company; Executive Director of Uranium Enrichment Company; National Security Advisor to Prime Minister Blair	Meetings
23-24 August	Paris, France	Chairman of French Atomic Energy Commission; Executive Director of International Energy Agency; Director General of the Nuclear Energy Agency; CEO of Areva; Minister of Industry	Meetings
<i>Attorney General Ashcroft</i>			
16 August		b(6)	
<i>Secretary Chao</i>			
16 August	Manchester/Concord, NH	Workforce Investment Board	Grant Announcement

17 August	Albuquerque, NM	Pueblo of Laguna Tribe	Grant Announcement with Senator Domenici
17 August	Albuquerque, NM	New Mexico Women's Roundtable	Political Event for Women
18 August	Cleveland, OH	Fraternal Order of Police	Remarks
19 August	Detroit, MI	Fraternal Order of Police	Remarks
20 August	Washington, D.C.	State Numbers Day Release	Press
21-27 August	b(6)		
<i>Secretary Evans</i>			
18 August	Cincinnati, OH	Roundtable; Economic Development Administration Grant; Editorial Board; Ohio Business Manufacturers Council	Attend; Presentation; Press; Dinner
19 August	Cleveland, OH	Factory Tour; Factory Town Hall; Women's Business Roundtable	Attend, Remarks
<i>Secretary Jackson</i>			
16 August	Washington, D.C.	Blacks in Government Leadership Award	Speech
19-26 August	b(6)		
<i>Administrator Leavitt</i>			
17-18 August	Erie, PA	Stakeholders, State, and Local Officials; Press Events	Meetings to Highlight Great Lakes Regional Collaborative Initiatives

<i>Secretary Mineta</i>			
17 August	Southeastern, CT	Environmental Streamlining Event	Speech
19 August	Washington, D.C	Department of Transportation Diversity Council Meeting	Remarks
<i>Secretary Norton</i>			
18 August	Carson City, NV	Political Event	Attend, Remarks
19 August	Eugene, OR; Coburg, OR; Redmond, OR	Morning Shows; Monaco RV Facility; Family Motor Coach Association Annual Convention	Press; Tour, Remarks; Speech with Representative Walden
20 August	Bend, OR	Water 2025 Groundbreaking Ceremony	Speech
20 August	Clark County, WA	Political Event	Attend, Remarks
<i>Secretary Paige</i>			
20-22 August	[REDACTED] b(6) [REDACTED]		
<i>Secretary Powell</i>			
16 August	Cincinnati, OH	Editorial Board; Underground Railroad Museum; Convention Reception and Banquet	Press; Tour; Attend
17-27 August	[REDACTED] b(6) [REDACTED]		
<i>Secretary Principi</i>			
16 August	Cincinnati, OH	Event with POTUS for Veterans of Foreign Wars;	Attend

17 August	Cincinnati, OH	Reception and Dinner Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention	Remarks
18 August	Washington, D.C.	Annual Senior Management Conference “Champions of Veterans Affairs”	Speech
19 August	Washington, D.C.	Introduce Former Senator Dole at the Washington Hilton	Remarks
19 August	Manchester, NH	Veterans Rollout Event with Congressman Bradley	Attend, Remarks
21-22 August	New York, NY	Mayor Michael Bloomberg	Meetings
<i>Secretary Snow</i>			
18-19 August	Springfield, MO	Discuss Economy, Jobs, and Growth with Community	Remarks
19-20 August	Des Moines, IA	Discuss Economy, Jobs, and Growth with Community	Remarks
<i>Secretary Thompson</i>			
19-20 August	Boise, ID	Continental Divide Trail Association Annual Ride	Participate
20 August	Whitefish Bay, WI	University of Wisconsin Veterinary Event	Attend
20 August	[Redacted] b(6)		

Secretary Veneman

16-17 August	Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic	Inauguration Ceremony for President Leonel Fernandez Reyna and Related Events; Global Fund for Education Agreement	Attend, Remarks; Sign
18 August	Washington, D.C.	USDA Rural Development Annual Conference	Speech
18 August	(b)(6)		
19 August	Bend, OR; Redmond, OR	Healthy Forests; Forest Service Ceremony with Congressman Walden; Political Fundraiser	Tour, Attend
19-20 August	Sacramento, CA	California State Fair; Bill Jones Senate Fundraiser	Speech; Attend
21 August	Stockton, CA	Fundraiser for Congressman Richard Pombo; Ribbon Cutting at USDA Service Center	Attend, Remarks

CABINET REPORT
For the Week of August 16, 2004

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

- ***Electric Loans to be Awarded in Several States.***
This week, the Department will announce \$250 million in electric loans for Montana, Kentucky, Texas, Iowa, Wyoming, Nebraska, and North Carolina. These loans will be used to upgrade and expand electric infrastructure and finance construction or replacement of electric transmission and generation facilities.
- ***First Responder and Economic Impact Grants to be Awarded in Several States.***
This week, the Department will announce approximately \$8.1 million in grants for communities in twenty states to fund emergency first responders, as well as \$16.4 million in grants to provide an economic stimulus to low income rural communities in 32 states.
- ***Announcement of Voluntary Minority Farm Register.***
On August 20, the Department will announce an effort to encourage minority farmers and ranchers to join the Minority Farm Register. Registrants will receive outreach materials, newsletters, and program announcements from USDA agencies, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and minority-serving educational institutions, as well as information and assistance from other USDA-approved outreach partners.

Press Activity:

- ***Wall Street Journal on School Meals Program.***
The Wall Street Journal is working on a story on the school meals program. It will discuss trends towards healthier alternatives in school food purchases. The Department is providing background information. The story should be balanced, and no publication date has been set.
- ***Gallup Poll Survey on Attitudes Toward Government's Role in Food Safety.***
On August 17, the Gallup Organization will release a survey focusing on consumer attitudes on the Federal government's role in food safety. Eighty-five percent of people polled indicated that the government was doing a fair/good job in protecting the public from food-borne illness. Media interest in this survey is expected, and positive coverage is anticipated.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

- ***Secretary Evans to Participate in Check Presentation Ceremony in Cincinnati, Ohio.***
On August 18, the Secretary will participate in an Economic Development Administration check presentation event in Cincinnati, Ohio. He will present a \$2 million investment check for the Port of Greater Cincinnati Development Authority to use for road construction projects.
- ***Secretary Evans to Speak to Local Manufacturers at KraftMaid Cabinetry Factory.***
On August 19, the Secretary will discuss the economy with local manufacturers at the

KraftMaid Cabinetry manufacturing plant in Middlefield, Ohio. The Secretary will be joined by Assistant Secretary Frink, KraftMaid employees, and other local manufacturers. KraftMaid, the largest kitchen cabinet manufacturer in the U.S., plans to hire 200 employees in the coming months.

- ***Upcoming Economic Indicator Releases from Commerce.***
U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services: June 2004 (August 13)
Consumer Price Index: July 2004 (August 17)
Housing Starts: July 2004 (August 17)
Industrial Production and Capacity Utilization: July 2004 (August 17)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- ***Rehabilitation Services Administration to Co-Sponsor National Employment Conference.***
From August 16 to 18, the Department's Rehabilitation Services Administration will co-sponsor the 2004 National Employment Conference in Washington, D.C. The theme is "The Vocational Rehabilitation Business Partnership," and session topics include the infrastructure of State vocational rehabilitation agencies, creating and maintaining employer development, business relations, and large-scale job placement.
- ***Magnet School Grant to be Awarded in Washington State.***
On August 17, a Magnet School grant will be presented to the Tacoma Public Schools in Tacoma, Washington in the amount of \$357,968. The Magnet Schools Assistance program provides grants to eligible local educational agencies to establish and operate magnet schools under a court-ordered or federally approved voluntary desegregation plan. Magnet programs aim to eliminate, reduce, or prevent minority group isolation in elementary and secondary schools while strengthening students' knowledge of academic subjects and vocational skills.
- ***Library Grant Announcement in Florida.***
On August 17, the Department will present an "Improving Literacy Through School Libraries" grant in the amount of \$349,619 to the School Board of Madison County in Tallahassee, Florida. The grant, which will be used for elementary and secondary schools, is designed to improve student reading achievement by improving school library services and resources. Only school districts in which at least 20 percent of students served are from families with incomes below the poverty line are eligible to apply.
- ***Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Grant Announcement in Washington State.***
On August 17, the Northwest Indian College in Bellingham, Washington will be awarded an American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities grant of \$1.2 million. This grant is provided to eligible higher education institutions to improve their academic quality, institutional management, fiscal stability, and self-sufficiency.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

- ***Announcement of Funding of Projects to Advance Global Climate Change Initiative.***
This week, the Department will announce the selection of 18 projects under a broad solicitation for coal research. Initial funding is estimated at \$2.4 million, although potential funding may reach \$24.7 million over the life of all the projects, which range in duration from nine months to three years. The funding impetus is the Global Climate Change Initiative, which lays out an aggressive strategy for reducing greenhouse gas intensity by 18 percent over the next 10 years.
- ***Release of Study Concluding Huge Natural Gas Potential in San Juan Basin.***
This week, the Department will release a five-year study, which concludes that optimal infill drilling in the San Juan Basin may increase gas recovery from 23 to 46 percent and could prove to be a key factor in meeting future U.S. energy needs. Research illustrates that approximately 7.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas might be recovered from the Mesaverde producing area, depending on factors like reservoir conditions. Infill drilling increases the density of wells and allows additional wells to be drilled within a developed field.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

- ***2003 National Listing of Fish Advisories (Mercury Advisories).***
As early as August 19, EPA will announce the release of the 2003 National Listing of Fish Advisories. This listing is a compilation of fish advisory information, including mercury advisories, that the Federal government, states, tribes, territories, and local governments voluntarily submit for the EPA to develop a central repository of nationwide information. The 2003 listing will indicate that the number of fish advisories increased by ten percent compared to 2002. Although the EPA believes the increase is largely a result of enhanced monitoring and higher monitoring standards, it anticipates an unfavorable reaction from those who will interpret the increase in the number of advisories as an indicator of more mercury in the environment
- ***Administrator Leavitt to Continue Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Effort.***
During the week of August 16, Administrator Leavitt will continue his outreach visits to the Great Lakes region. Following up on a successful trip that included visits to lakeshore ports, government facilities dedicated to the Great Lakes, Tribal land, and an educational tour on the EPA's *Lake Guardian* research vessel, Administrator Leavitt will visit Erie, Pennsylvania on August 18 to meet with stakeholders and local officials. Administrator Leavitt's visits have helped garner support for the organization of the "Regional Collaboration of National Significance" called for in the Great Lakes Executive Order. Positive local media attention is expected.
- ***Administrator Leavitt to Deliver Speech on GEOSS.***
On August 17, Administrator Leavitt will deliver a speech at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), an international collaborative effort that merges technologies to establish a coordinated and sustained Earth Observation System. The Administrator will be joined by Administrator

Lautenbacher of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and positive media attention is anticipated.

Press Activity:

- ***Administrator Leavitt Interviewed by Los Angeles Times for Story on Coal.***
During the period of August 14 to 17, *The Los Angeles Times* is expected to run a story on coal-related politics and the effects of coal on the national marketplace. Administrator Leavitt was interviewed for the article. The tone of the article is anticipated to be mixed, reflecting the points-of-view of both the Administration and the environmental community.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- ***Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Meeting with Employers Coalition.***
On August 17, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator McClellan is scheduled to meet with the Employers Coalition on Medicare. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Coalition's key issues on the Medicare Modernization Act guidance, including the timing and process of the modernization.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

- ***Announcement of \$2.8 Million Competitive Training Grant.***
On August 15, DHS will announce a \$2.8 million competitive training grant to the University of Arkansas's National Center for Rural Law Enforcement in Little Rock, Arkansas. The National Center for Rural Law Enforcement is a university-based organization committed to helping rural law enforcement agencies meet this challenge of rising crime, limited resources, and geographic barriers by providing education and training for their staff.
- ***Possible Announcement of Domestic Passenger Prescreening Program.***
Next week, DHS will tentatively announce the next generation of domestic passenger prescreening that improves security of airline travelers by using expanded watch lists to ensure, in advance of flight, that passengers are not known or suspected terrorists; move passengers through airport screening more quickly and reduce the number of individuals unnecessarily selected for secondary screening; and fully protect passengers' privacy and civil liberties. TSA will begin testing of the basic components of the new domestic program as soon as November of this year and hopes to begin implementation next year after publishing and finalizing a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

Press Activity:

- ***DHS to Announce Pennsylvania Fire Grants.***
On August 17, DHS will announce \$112,000 in fire grants for the City of North Huntingdon, Pennsylvania and \$54,000 in fire grants for the City of Swissvale, Pennsylvania.

- ***Under Secretary Brown to Interview with News Media Organizations.***
On August 19, Under Secretary Brown will interview with Pennsylvania news media organizations in Philadelphia. The topic of discussion for the interviews will be all hazards preparedness and homeland security.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

- ***Reverse Mortgage Program Experiencing Unprecedented Growth.***
The Department's Home Equity Conversion Mortgage program, a reverse mortgage product for the elderly, is experiencing record activity. By August 20, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) insurance program is expected to reach a record \$6 billion in endorsements for FY 2004, double the \$3 billion endorsed the previous fiscal year, which had also been a record. FHA will insure more than 30,000 home equity conversion mortgages in FY 2004.
- ***Public and Indian Housing Completes Calculation of Grants.***
Pending Congressional notification, the office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) will allocate approximately \$2.5 billion in FY 2004 funds to over 3,160 public housing authorities. PIH anticipates the grants will be announced week of August 16.
- ***Community Development Block Grant Announcement in Lexington, Kentucky.***
On August 12, Deputy Secretary Bernardi will join Senator Jim Bunning (R-KY) and Lexington community leaders to announce \$63 million dollars in Community Development Block Grants for the State of Kentucky.

Press Activity:

- ***Chicago Tribune on Fair Housing Cases.***
The Chicago Tribune is planning an in-depth article on outstanding fair housing cases (i.e. no action has been taken) that have been referred to the Justice Department. Department officials and affected residents have been interviewed. A publication date has not been determined, but the story is expected to be negative.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

- ***Publication of Final Critical Habitat for Mexican Spotted Owl.***
This week, in compliance with a Federal court order handed down in January 2003, the Department will designate approximately 9.8 million acres of Federal and tribal land in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah as "critical habitat" for the Mexican Spotted Owl. Environmentalist organizations initiated the litigation that resulted in the court order. Groups including ranchers and the timber industry are unhappy with this action but are aware that the Department is acting pursuant to a court order.
- ***Bureau of Reclamation to Release Lake Mead (Nevada) Water Elevation Study.***
On August 13, a two-year study of Lake Mead (Nevada) water elevations will be released.

The study is expected to project a water level below 1,125 feet for January 2005, which will result in the disappearance of surplus water and a drought emergency in Las Vegas, which will involve the implementation of water restrictions in the city.

Press Activity:

- ***L.A. Times on Administration Record on Wilderness, Preservation, and Development.***
The Los Angeles Times is preparing a story on the Administration record on wilderness, land preservation, and oil and gas development in the Rocky Mountains. Secretary Norton was interviewed on August 11. The story is expected to be published next week and is anticipated to be negative.
- ***Secretary Norton to Participate in Editorial Board with Oregon Newspaper.***
On August 19, the Secretary will participate in an editorial board with *The Register Guard* in Eugene, Oregon. Topics discussed are likely to include National Parks funding and wildfires.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

- ***Potential Partial Birth Abortion Act District Court Decisions.***
As early as late August, district courts in both New York and Nebraska may rule on the constitutionality of the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003. A district court in California has already ruled it unconstitutional, and the Department has filed a notice of appeal in that case.
- ***Brief to be Filed in First Amendment Case.***
On August 17, the Department will file a brief as petitioner in *Veneman v. Livestock Marketing Association* and *Nebraska Cattlemen v. Livestock Marketing Association*. The question presented is whether the Beef Promotion and Research Act of 1985, 7 U.S.C. § 2901 et seq., and the implementing Beef Promotion and Research Order, 7 C.F.R. Part 1260, violate the First Amendment insofar as they require cattle producers to pay assessments to fund generic advertising with which they disagree.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

- ***Announcement of Faith-Based Grants to Workforce Investment Boards in Various States.***
On August 16, the Department will announce 12 faith-based grants totaling \$5.8 million to Workforce Investment Boards in 11 states, including Colorado, Florida, Michigan, and New Hampshire. The grants will help faith-based and community organizations reach job seekers and help workers connect with resources available at One-Stop Career Centers. Secretary Chao will participate in satellite interviews with press from the various states.
- ***Announcement of Job Training Grant to the Pueblo of Laguna Tribe in New Mexico.***
On August 17, the Department will announce a \$3.2 million grant to the Pueblo of Laguna Tribe. The grant, which is part of the Department's \$54.6 million Youth Offender

Demonstration Project, will support a job training project for approximately 260 at-risk tribal youth, between the ages of 14 and 24, who live on the Pueblo of Laguna Reservation. Secretary Chao will be joined by Senator Pete Domenici (R-NM) for this announcement in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

- ***Signing of Alliance with Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors Association.***
On August 16, the Department will sign an alliance with the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors National Association in Washington, D.C. The alliance will provide association members and others in the industry, including Hispanic and youth workers, with information and access to training resources that will help protect employees' health and safety. Senior officials from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration will participate in this event.

Press Activity:

- ***Bureau of Labor Statistics to Release Price, Real Earnings and State Employment Reports.***
On August 17, the Bureau of Labor Statistics will release the Consumer Price Index Report for July 2004 along with the Real Earnings Report for July 2004. On August 20, they will release the Regional and State Employment and Unemployment Report for July 2004.
- ***Secretary Chao Satellite Press Interviews on July State Employment Numbers.***
On August 20, the Secretary will participate in satellite interviews with press from various states following the release of the July 2004 Regional and State Employment and Unemployment Report.

NASA

- ***Robotic Mission to Hubble Announced.***
On August 2 at Goddard Space Flight Center, Administrator O'Keefe proposed a full robotic servicing mission to Hubble to extend its life by an additional five years. Due to the projected life of the Hubble's batteries, the robot must reach the observatory before 2009. Should the batteries fail before this time, the repair mission would become strictly a de-orbit mission. While NASA is doing nothing to preclude a Shuttle servicing mission to Hubble, it nonetheless still appears to be too difficult to satisfy the CAIB requirements. Next summer, external experts will look at the final design of the mission to determine whether the design as presented is feasible, within reasonable risk, and can be accomplished within budget and on schedule. However, an amendment to the FY 2005 budget will be required, and the Administrator will decide within the next few weeks how to proceed.
- ***Legislative Activity.***
The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on VA-HUD-Independent Agencies is targeted to mark up the FY 2005 VA-HUD-IA bill during the week of September 6 or September 13. On September 9, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation (Chairman McCain R-AZ) has proposed a hearing on Return to Flight. Administrator O'Keefe will be the witness. On September 12, the House Science Committee's Subcommittee on Space and Aeronautics has proposed a hearing on International Space

Station Safety. Additionally, the Senate Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space has proposed a field hearing on the Hubble Space Telescope Robotic Servicing Mission at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. Witnesses will include NASA and a representative from the National Academy of Sciences. Also in September, the House Science Committee has proposed a hearing on NASA's financial management.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

- ***U.S. Delegation to Dominican Presidential Inauguration.***
On August 16, Leonel Fernandez Reyna will be sworn in as President of the Dominican Republic. U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Veneman will head the U.S. delegation. This is Mr. Fernandez's second term as President; he held the same office from 1996 to 2000.

Press Activity:

- ***Secretary Powell to Address the Veterans of Foreign Wars Conference.***
On August 16, the Secretary is schedule to address the Veterans of Foreign Wars Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio. He will speak on the topics of foreign policy and diplomacy. This event will be open to the press.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

- ***Announcement of Projects Eligible for Accelerated Environmental Review.***
On August 17 and 19, the Department will announce projects approved to receive accelerated environmental review under the Executive Order on Environmental Stewardship and Transportation Infrastructure Project Reviews. The E.O. allows for coordinated environmental reviews of designated projects, greatly reducing delays in project planning and construction. Projects will be announced in Texas, Georgia, Connecticut, and Utah on August 17, and in Ohio and California on August 19.

Press Activity:

- ***Federal Aviation Administration Announcement of Runway Incursion Reductions.***
On August 17, Administrator Blakey will host a media roundtable to discuss the Federal Aviation Administration's efforts to improve runway safety. The number of runway incursions declined dramatically in 2003, with the most serious incursions decreasing 52 percent over the four-year reporting period. In addition, for the second consecutive year, there were no serious incursions involving two large commercial jets.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

- ***Fiscal Service Migration of Cash Management System.***
On August 16, Fiscal Service will move its cash management system from the main Treasury building to the Bureau of the Public Debt system platform at Parkersburg, West Virginia. This system is part of the National Critical Infrastructure and serves as the backbone of the Department's cash management program. This migration will reduce annual operating and maintenance costs by approximately \$ 1 million over a three-year period and improve security for one of the government's most critical applications.
- ***Meeting of Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group Task Force.***
From August 16 to 19, representatives from the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence will attend the Annual General Meeting of the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) Task Force of Senior Officials and Council of Ministers in Mauritius. Key topics of discussion will be progress in implementing national regimes and technical assistance needed to support the process. ESAAMLG's members are Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Lesotho, Mauritius, Uganda, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, Swaziland, Seychelles, and Zimbabwe. The United States is an observer to ESAAMLG and is one of its primary financial supporters. The U.S. delegation is led by the Treasury Department, with participation from the State and Justice Departments.
- ***Secretary Snow to Discuss the Economy in the Midwest.***
From August 19 through 20, the Secretary will travel to Missouri and Iowa for discussions on the economy. On August 19, he will meet with the Southeast Springfield Rotary Club. On August 20, he will participate in an event with Senator Grassley (R-IA) on the Iowa Keelboat Nickel Launch at the Iowa State Fair. During these visits, he will participate in interviews with local radio and print media.

Press Activity:

- ***Secretary Snow Op-Ed on Terrorist Financing in Orlando Sentinel.***
This week, an op-ed on terrorist financing is expected to be published in the *Orlando Sentinel*. The Secretary will highlight continued efforts in the war against terrorism. Key points include shutting down terrorists' financial networks and highlighting success achieved with the help of the United States' international partners to identify and stop the flow of money. The article will note that nearly \$142 million in terrorist-related assets worldwide have been frozen.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

- ***Secretary Principi to Deliver Remarks at VFW 105th National Convention.***
On August 16 and 17, the Secretary will attend the Veterans of Foreign Wars' (VFW) National Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. In his remarks, he will discuss the delivery of benefits and services to the newest generation of combat veterans (those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan), the realignment of the VA health care system (CARES), and Department success in drastically reducing waiting lists for health care and backlogs for claims.

- ***Veterans Health Administration to Host Senior Management Conference.***
From August 17 to 19, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) will host a Senior Management Conference in Washington, D.C. The conference provides a forum for VA leaders to discuss current existing and potential issues, with a focus on the four VHA mission areas of medical care, education, research, and emergency management. The conference will also recognize the achievements of employees who serve veterans with exceptional respect and care. Both Secretary Principi and Senator Bob Dole will deliver remarks.
- ***Review of Long-Term Effects of Exposure to Sarin to be Made Public.***
On August 20, the Institute of Medicine (IOM), a part of the National Academy of Sciences, will release an update to its Year 2000 review of the long-term health effects from exposure to low doses of the chemical warfare agent sarin. For its update, the IOM examined all new scientific literature published since its 2000 report. IOM concluded that there is still inadequate or insufficient evidence to determine whether an association does or does not exist between exposure to sarin at low doses and subsequent long-term adverse neurological health effects. The Department will work with IOM to communicate the results of this update to the press, Congress, veteran's service organizations, and others.

Press Activity:

- ***Secretary on Administration Accomplishments.***
On August 15, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* will publish an interview with Secretary Principi about the Administration's accomplishments on behalf of veterans. Cincinnati is hosting the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) convention. VA expects the story to be positive.
- ***Secretary Principi to Participate in Local Media Availability in Cincinnati, Ohio.***
On August 17, as part of his appearance at the VFW National Convention, the Secretary will participate in a local media availability to discuss Department outreach efforts for returning veterans, the realignment of the VA health care system, and issues of local interest.

OTHER AGENCIES

General Services Administration:

- ***Federal Technology Service Conference to Emphasize Excellence in Acquisition.***
On August 17, Administrator Perry will address approximately 1,200 Federal agency telecommunications and IT managers at the GSA Federal Technology Service Network Services Conference in Nashville, Tennessee. He will highlight how GSA creates opportunities for small business and acknowledge the strong partnership between the Federal Technology Service, GSA Federal customer agencies, and GSA industry partners.

Office of Personnel Management:

- ***OPM to Issue Emergency Awareness Memorandum on Period of Heightened Security.***
This week, Director James will issue a memorandum to the heads of departments and agencies emphasizing the importance of emergency awareness and employee safety during

this period of heightened security. The memorandum will urge agencies to be mindful of including unions in emergency planning, ensure employees are aware of evacuation routes, and utilize the “OPM Emergency Guide.” It may attract favorable media attention.

Small Business Administration:

- ***Business Matchmaking Event in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.***
On August 17, SBA will co-host a Business Matchmaking event in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Produced jointly by SBA and Hewlett-Packard, this event presents an opportunity for hundreds of small business owners to participate in one-on-one meetings with government and private sector buyers. Administrator Barreto will deliver remarks.