

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED ADMINISTRATIVE/PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AWARD



JULIE BROOKHART  
REGIONAL EXTERNAL AFFAIRS - MEDIA AFFAIRS SPECIALIST  
CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES (CMS)  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Julie Brookhart, Public Affairs Specialist, Regional External Affairs team in the Kansas City Regional Office (KCRO) of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, not only handles media relations for the KCRO but she is one of three team members on the Regional External Affairs team who is responsible for outreach and education for CMS initiatives in the Kansas City region, (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska).

Since the beginning of 2011 Julie was charged with leading a cross-divisional outreach team in the KCRO to promote the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP) program brought about by the Affordable Care Act legislation. The Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan program makes available health insurance coverage to millions of Americans who were previously denied healthcare coverage due to a pre-existing condition. For those Americans trapped in this situation it can be desperate and bleak trying to pay for life-saving medical care without insurance. An untreated medical condition may prevent people from working and frequently disrupts their relationships with friends and family. It can cost people their livelihood—and in some cases their lives. The transitional PCIP program will continue until 2014 when Americans, regardless of their health status, will have access to affordable health insurance because insurers will no longer be allowed to deny coverage to people with *any* pre-existing condition, like cancer, diabetes, and asthma. Under PCIP, you are insured for a wide range of benefits and you won't be charged a higher premium because of your medical condition and your eligibility isn't based on your income.

Julie and the PCIP outreach team have innovatively reached numerous new and the *right and most essential* partners and organizations through direct presentations, webinars, mailings, meetings, and the media, who are now conduits for educating consumers who may benefit from this critical health insurance program. As a result enrollment numbers for each of the CMS KCRO four states have increased by more than 100%. In Nebraska, where the team primarily focused their outreach efforts, due to Nebraska's PCIP program being administered solely by CMS, the federal government and the other three states being administered by the state, enrollment has increased 179% the past year.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED CLERICAL SERVICE AWARD



ERIC G. HERNANDEZ  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER  
KANSAS CITY VA MEDICAL CENTER

Mr. Eric Hernandez came to the Kansas City VA Medical Center in June 2008 as Medical Support Assistant for the newly implemented Home Based Primary Care Program. Prior to this he served eight years active duty in the U.S. Army.

Mr. Hernandez is valued for his ability to integrate his military training, experience, and leadership skills into his current position. He constantly performs beyond the normal scope of his assigned duties and sets the standard for his peers. His sensitivity in dealing with Veterans and their families has brought recognition from them, those referring patients to Home Based Primary Care, and from his colleagues. His skill in managing people is apparent as he pleasantly executes daily operations of the program. He uses excellent problem solving skills and critical thinking in triaging phone calls from patients and their caregivers. His interpersonal skills are exemplary.

Mr. Hernandez has proven time and time again to be a highly skilled Medical Support Assistant, functioning at a level far above his years of experience. His efforts on behalf of Veterans, their families, and staff have been recognized by all with whom he comes in contact. He has ensured that the Kansas City VA Medical Center's Home Based Primary Care program is an integral part of the Veterans' continuum of care. He expeditiously and flawlessly navigates the many processes and procedures to obtain the needed results for our patients and staff thus enabling the Home Based Primary Care providers to function more effectively. He was also instrumental in assisting with a proposal to implement a new extended care program, Medical Foster Home, for eligible Veterans. The proposal received funding from VA Central Office and Mr. Hernandez is now assisting with program development.

His many talents and demonstration of potential to accept positions of greater responsibility resulted in his recent selection for promotion to Administrative Officer for Clinical Support Service.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD



ELIODORA CHAMBERLAIN  
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST  
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Eliodora Chamberlain is an Environmental Scientist with the Region 7 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Kansas City. Eliodora's outstanding performance focused on several key projects related to wetland and stream protection. She worked collaboratively with federal, state, tribal and local partners to maximize protection of wetlands and streams.

When Eliodora is not working for EPA she is a volunteer member of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Missouri Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team. FEMA established the USAR Response System in 1989 as a framework for structuring local emergency services personnel into integrated disaster response task forces.

Eliodora and her USAR team were deployed to Joplin, MO, on May 23, 2011, shortly after an EF5 tornado, the most severe tornado rating, with winds reaching 200 mph, swept across the city killing at least 122 people. The rescue crews worked through thunderstorms with lightning and strong winds to dig through splintered homes, crumpled businesses and crushed cars. The efforts from the USAR team resulted in at least 17 people being rescued alive.

Eliodora currently holds two positions on the FEMA team: Canine Search Specialist and Canine Coordinator for the state of Missouri. As a Canine Search Specialist, she trains dogs to search for live humans that are trapped or entombed beneath collapsed buildings. In addition to training the dogs, she completes FEMA training requirements in order to be certified for FEMA deployments. She is required to be an emergency medical technician. As the Canine Coordinator she manages and conducts trainings for 13 canine handlers and their dogs on the Missouri Team.

Below is a list of the deployments Eliodora has participated in:

- 2011 Joplin Tornado
- 2008 Hurricane Ike, Republican National Convention & Hurricane Dolly
- 2007 Hurricane Dean
- 2006 Elks Lodge Collapse, Clinton, Missouri & Hurricane Ernesto
- 2005 Hurricanes Katrina & Dennis
- 2004 Lebanon Daily Tribune Building Collapse, Lebanon, Missouri
- 2003 Hurricane Isabel

The bottom line in urban search-and-rescue, lives are saved because of the skills these rescuers gain. These first responders consistently go to the front lines when America needs them most. We are proud to have Eliodora as a part of our community.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP AWARD



MICHELLE SANDERS SPARKS  
ACTING DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR HUMAN RESOURCES  
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION, KANSAS CITY REGION

Michelle Sanders Sparks is the Acting Center Director for Human Resources with the Social Security Administration (SSA), Kansas City Region. Michelle performs public service with pride, caring passionately for her employees. She consistently inspires others, having touched countless lives during her career.

Michelle began her career with SSA as a Claims Representative in the Emporia, Kansas Social Security Field Office. She has held increasingly responsible positions and served in a variety of leadership roles.

She leads a diverse group of dedicated employees who provide oversight and guidance to SSA employees and managers on all human resources functions. She is constantly researching new trends in human resources and challenging her teams to develop fresh and innovative resources to meet the changing needs of employees and managers.

In response to significant personnel losses, Michelle used her business acumen, coalition building, and leadership skills to create career development opportunities for her staff and other regional employees. This enabled her to ensure timeliness of service to the regions' over 2,600 employees, as well as maintain high productivity and employee morale within her center.

SSA has recognized Michelle for her leadership on agency-wide human resources projects and she regularly contributes her valuable technical expertise and advice in the development of SSA business processes.

Michelle's enthusiasm, positive and can-do attitude, flexibility, resilience and dedication to public service are evident in her leadership style and, most importantly, in the quality of service her center consistently provides.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



BRENDA LEE LADAGE  
LEASING CONTRACTING OFFICER  
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
PUBLIC BUILDING SERVICE

In a career of federal government service that has spanned nearly half a century, Leasing Contracting Officer Brenda Lee Ladage has truly been the calming force in the storm. She has worked for the government for 48 years and has 19 years of experience working on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) leasing projects. Her work, even in the aftermath of devastating natural disasters, enables FEMA to provide desperately needed services to citizens.

Brenda has worked solely on FEMA leased projects for the last four years. Over that time – as the Heartland and other regions have been shaken by tornadoes, storms, floods and other catastrophes – Brenda became the General Services Administration’s subject matter expert for helping FEMA quickly get the operational space it needs to help communities recover. Whether the need is for pad sites, buildings or land, Brenda has consistently delivered whatever was required.

Since her first FEMA lease in 1993, Brenda has worked 143 disasters, with most occurring in GSA’s four-state Heartland Region: Missouri (40), Kansas (35), Nebraska (34) and Iowa (32). The others were an earthquake in California in 1994 and Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana in 2005. In all, she has completed 192 FEMA leases to date.

That time span includes such turbulent years as 2011, when Brenda worked on 34 leases, ranging from the deadly Joplin tornado in May to the crippling Nebraska flooding a month later. It includes 2007 and 2008, when she worked on 60 total FEMA leases for tragedies ranging from the Greensburg, Kan., tornado to destructive flooding in Iowa.

Even now, as another storm season unfolds across the Heartland, Brenda is heading into the affected areas to make sure FEMA is equipped to respond to victims and their families.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED MILITARY AWARD



JAMES E. WALKER  
HUMAN RESOURCE ASSISTANT  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Walker has served as an enlisted Soldier in the Navy, Air Force and Army Reserve. He serves as the Commander for the 85<sup>th</sup> Army Band in Arlington Heights. Upon assuming the command, Mr. Walker improved the unit utilizing the metrics used to monitor all bands in the 88<sup>th</sup> Regional Support Command (RSC) while raising their strength to 10%, the first time in its twenty year history, allowing the Unit to win the Reserve Officers Association Outstanding Unit Award in February 2012.

Mr. Walker volunteered as OIC for the 2011 St. Patrick's Day parade in Chicago and led a band of over 170 members during a flawless performance. He also led his band in such events as the Chicago Sky's 2011 halftime show, the 2011 American Celebration IV, the 2007-2011 United Service Organization Gala, the 2007-2011 Union League Club Armed Forces Ball, etc. The band was selected to play at the recognition ceremony for 36 Medal of Honor recipients in June 2011. Additionally, the 85<sup>th</sup> was selected by FORSCOM to perform in Europe in July 2012.

Mr. Walker scheduled and conducted the 85<sup>th</sup> Army Band to perform at the 2011 DOT Veterans' Day Celebration in the Kansas City DOT Regional Office. He invited Brigadier General Berry as the key note speaker, created power point display in the words of each Armed Services Medley, delivered "a Letter from Mom" power point with special music, and obtained all material needed for the POW/MIA. The 2011 DOT Veterans' Day Celebration was the most successful of all DOT Veterans' Day Celebrations.

Mr. Walker is a well-rounded and experienced warrant officer with a history of accomplishments and success in both his military and civilian life. He completed a Master's degree in Music Education and the Warrant Officer Basic and Advanced Courses. Mr. Walker's personal initiative and unswerving devotion to duty reflect great credit upon himself.

Mr. Walker serves as a church choir director, pops orchestra director, adjunct college instructor, and co-founded program to celebrate American through music. He also performs as an instrumentalist soloist and musician in various orchestras and attended several recruiting events during the past year.

## UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT DISTINGUISHED TEAM AWARD



JOPLIN TORNADO RESPONSE TEAM  
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

On May 22, 2011, a tornado left a path of destruction six miles long and a half mile wide through the center of Joplin, Mo. In the twister's aftermath, 8,000 structures were destroyed, 14,000 residents were left homeless, hundreds were injured, and 160 people were killed, making the Joplin tornado the country's deadliest since 1947 and the 17<sup>th</sup> deadliest in U.S. history.

In response to the disaster, EPA Region 7's Rapid Needs Assessment, Air Monitoring, and Household Hazardous Waste Collection and Disposal crews were deployed to Joplin on various specialized missions that would continue over more than three months. Initial team deployments focused on assessments and responses to immediate and critical environmental situations. EPA and its contractors then began conducting daily air quality monitoring in and around the debris zone, and shared their results and interpretation with the general public to help protect residents, recovery workers and volunteers from air contaminants generated by tornado debris removal and structural demolition. By the time field activities were successfully completed in September, EPA Region 7 and its hazardous waste collection contractors had collected and recycled or safely disposed of more than 104,000 items containing hazardous materials, including 156 tons of electronic equipment and 257 tons of white goods. These collection activities helped protect the environment from further harm, saved much-needed landfill space for other debris disposal, and because of the recycling component, saved taxpayers' money through the recovery of a significant portion of EPA's operating costs.

The EPA Region 7 Tornado Response Team's efforts required extraordinary coordination and cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, various agencies of the State of Missouri, city and county governments, law enforcement, the citizens of Joplin, private contracting firms, and thousands of volunteers and paid recovery workers.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED TECHNICAL SERVICE AWARD



JAMES CHILDERS  
ENGINEER TECHNICIAN  
U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Since 1996, Mr. James (Jimmy) Childers has held many positions in the construction field from Electrician to Engineer Technician. He is currently working for the Kansas City District Corps of Engineers on Fort Leonard Wood and is responsible for providing quality projects in the Military Construction Program throughout half of the state of Missouri for the Fort Leonard Wood South Resident Office.

Jimmy has successfully kept up with best building practices and code compliance over the years. He has done this through training, certifications, and licensing. To date, Jimmy holds 18 International Building Code certifications, is a LEED Green Associate, and is a licensed Master Electrician.

Jimmy helped Fort Leonard Wood (FLW), Missouri become home to the U.S. Army Prime Power School. Jimmy and his teammates supported this school's move by participating in the design oversight and construction management of the \$29 million, 77,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art facility. Jimmy and his team's efforts greatly assisted in the building receiving a LEED Gold rating from the US Green Building Council. This project followed the Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) delivery method which brings the construction contractor into the design process.

Jimmy volunteered to support the Joplin/Duquesne Tornado Recovery Operations as the Field Utility Coordinator. His skills and abilities were required to help recover and rebuild from a tornado that devastated Joplin on 22 May 2011. Immediately after the tornado destruction occurred, Jimmy was working with damaged utilities. Jimmy possesses the requisite technical electrical skills and teaming abilities to allow him to make a difference in the lives of the Joplin population. His efforts paid off in safe and effective emergency operations at the beginning of the recovery effort when it was needed most.

Mr. James Childers' extraordinary knowledge of construction oversight, environmental protection, safety, and the Corps of Engineers business processes have enabled him to achieve superb results on large and projects at Fort Leonard Wood, and during emergency operations. With his knowledge and people skills, he has prevented numerous problems from ever developing and has ensured his assigned projects proceed with the highest level of quality and timeliness. He exemplifies dedication and pride of work for his team, the Resident Office, the Corps of Engineers, and the United States of America.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED TRADE/CRAFT SERVICE AWARD



EARL SHACKELFORD  
UTILITY SYSTEM OPERATIONS  
U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Earl Shackelford's position at the lake is similar to a public works superintendent of a small city – without him we wouldn't have water, sanitary sewers, or electricity. Earl does an outstanding job operating and maintaining our water treatment, wastewater treatment, and electrical systems allowing us to serve over 1.6 million visitors each year who utilize the campgrounds and other facilities at our 7,000 acre lake and 22,000 acres of public lands.

Mr. Shackelford also does an excellent job maintaining the Clinton and Hillsdale dams and control towers to ensure they perform as designed to provide critical flood control and water supply benefits for the people of the region (over \$1.9 billion in flood damages prevented since 1980 and over 3 billions of gallons of water supply per year). Without outstanding public servants like Mr. Earl Shackelford, we would not be able to provide these important benefits to the public we serve.

This past year, in addition to his vital day-to-day duties, Mr. Shackelford prepared plans and specifications and oversaw contractors for several critical maintenance projects including an electrical upgrade project to replace an antiquated fused main electric panel with a breaker panel that improved the safety of our staff and reliability for our visitors in our busiest campground; completion of a major rehabilitation of a critical sewage lift station; worked with our Maintenance Mechanic, Mr. Jack Frisbie, to design, procure parts, and install an additional 12 water supply hook-ups to improve facilities for our visitors; and acted quickly to restore our parks to a safe, usable condition after a storm with 60 MPH winds downed numerous trees and scattered thousands of tree limbs throughout the park. These special projects saved the government thousands of dollars in labor, contract, and breakdown maintenance costs.

Team members like Earl Shackelford who wear multiple hats and are creative, motivated, and have a great work ethic are essential in these days of reduced staff and budgets. Earl is the model of an outstanding public servant because he solves every challenge efficiently and effectively, saving taxpayers thousands of dollars and improving our ability to serve the public.