

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
DISTINGUISHED ADMINISTRATIVE/PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AWARD



PEDRO R. VILLANUEVA, JR.
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
KANSAS CITY VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

Only outstanding could describe the accomplishments Pedro “Pete” Villanueva achieved the minute he stepped foot in the Kansas City VA Medical Center. As the executive secretary and office manager, he has demonstrated that his knowledge of administrative practices is without parallel for a person of his time in service within the medical center. His 22 years of military experience with the U.S. Air Force has proven beneficial with the medical center.

In 2008 alone, Pete’s intuitive ideas have improved the way KCVAMC does day-to-day business. He suggested the requisitioning of digital senders to cut down the time processing and uploading document files. His suggestion resulted in high-praise by the information technology division, providing a benchmark to supply the medical center with 16 more devices. This increased productivity of scanning, uploading and sending medical records, receipts and other correspondence by more than 300 percent!

In an effort to go “green,” he cut down on the number of paper copies of higher-headquarters inquiries by sending them securely through encrypted e-mails. Then, he created an Access database to track over 300 inquiries for 2008. Paper savings was cut by more than half and searching speed of inquiry statuses increased ten-fold, as well as increasing response time by 30 percent.

Always thinking of his fellow employees, he drafted the first Administrative Professional of the Year standard of operating procedures guide—ensuring grade-level awards are conducive and fair to competition. His “Letters to Parents” program further enhanced morale to the award recipient.

These are just a few of the many undertakings Pete has accomplished at the KCVAMC. He has earned the respect of both Congressional staffers and hospital managers with his service oriented attitude, reflecting on others to emulate. He is truly deserving of the 2009 Distinguished Administrative/Professional Award.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
DISTINGUISHED CLERICAL SERVICE AWARD



DELORES HAGEY
SURVEY CLERK
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

As an Office Automation Clerk for the U.S. Census Bureau's Kansas City Regional Office, Delores Hagey provides unparalleled support for three medical survey programs. Ms. Hagey routinely goes beyond the expectations of her position.

Delores is not satisfied with just performing her duties at a satisfactory level. She does not consider herself successful unless her department has achieved its goals. This means that she often performs duties beyond the scope of the typical clerical position. Delores will do whatever needs to be done for the good of the program, regardless if it is her responsibility or not.

This year, Delores took the initiative to set-up a reporting schedule for our data collection field staff of 45 employees. She follows-up with the staff and monitors their progress.

She also took the lead on a pilot test project for the National Center for Health Statistics. The Kansas City Region was one of three offices who were selected to conduct this test. Delores identified the hospitals throughout the region that met the study's criteria and coordinated the field staff to complete the project. The pilot test was completed ahead of schedule and with 100% participation.

On several occasions Delores has volunteered to reschedule leave to assist with last minute meetings, meet urgent deadlines, or to deal with emergency survey needs. She does it all with a smile.

In addition to her duties of providing office support for the medical surveys, she is always the first to volunteer to assist other survey programs with additional help. Ms. Hagey's performance has resulted in a high level of success for the surveys she works, and has greatly benefited the Kansas City Regional Office.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD



RUVEN ORTIZ
PROGRAM COORDINATION SPECIALIST
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Since graduating high school, Ruven Ortiz of the GSA (General Services Administration) has been passionate about helping teens stay committed to education, especially those in at-risk neighborhoods. Just in the past year, Ruven has been an active volunteer with the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) in the National Educational Services Center. The center is focused on assisting disadvantaged and low-income youth gain admission to college. To support the center's mission and to help with character development in young Hispanic students, Ruven often speaks at area high schools sharing his personal testimony about his success earning his college degree despite his challenges growing up. He also assists the LULAC with fundraising fiestas by providing music, helping with raffles, and selling soft drinks. Money raised goes toward scholarships for the children.

Some of the high schools Ruven has visited to meet with students include Northeast High School in Kansas City, Missouri, Thatcher Elementary in Kansas City, Missouri, J.C. Harmon High School in Kansas City, Kansas, and Olathe North High School in Olathe, Kansas.

In addition to his involvement with the LULAC, Ruven is an active Big Brother to two boys, ages eight and ten, in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Kansas City program. These brothers come from a single parent home and speak predominantly Spanish. Ruven meets with these children twice a month. Some activities he's shared with these two children include baseball games, the ballet, pumpkin carving, and various other things. He serves as a friend, mentor and role model to these boys to encourage them to realize their potential and see themselves as having happy and successful futures.

Because of Ruven Ortiz's willingness to help both the Kansas City community and the GSA community, he earned an award of appreciation in recognition of dedication and commitment to the Heartland CFC Campaign in 2004, 2007 and 2008. Ruven annually helps with the fundraising efforts. His work has helped raise thousands of dollars for local, national and international charities.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP AWARD



JUDY K. MCKEE
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
KANSAS CITY VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

As the Associate Director for the Kansas City VA Medical Center, Judy's organizational and corporate responsibility is quite diverse and extensive. Her style of management can be best characterized as being based upon the cornerstones of maximum delegation, team approach and chemistry, motivational interventions and expeditious recognition of achievements.

With her introduction to the Greeter Program, everyone is met at the front door at the Center with a warm greeting, a smile, and an offer of assistance. "Welcome" –this is what you now hear when you arrive at the Kansas City VA Medical Center. A greeter program implemented last year has become one of the most rewarding experiences for patients, families, visitors and staff. Veterans or visitors no longer have a problem finding a service or program in the Medical Center.

As the chair for the Center's Systems Redesign Committee, she drastically reduced the waiting time of more than 30 days from 5.3% to 0.86%. This contributed in the Center ranking as the 13th most improved Medical Center within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Judy always demonstrates professionalism, diplomacy, compassion and a zeal for operational efficiency. She has a prolific prowess in being able to adapt rapidly to changing factors and variables regardless of whether they are fiduciary, organizational, political, regulatory or logistical in nature. Her team building acumen, empowerment initiative and finesse skills with challenging and sometimes competing stakeholders have proven instrumental in resolving sensitive situations throughout her wide ranging area of executive responsibility.

In summary, Ms. McKee's entire leadership portfolio is inspiring to a whole host of stakeholders, but especially so to our Veterans, their families and our employees and their families. She is thus most deserving of the 2009 Public Employees Recognition Leadership Award.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
DISTINGUISHED LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



RONALD J. HOSKING
REGIONAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AUDIT
U.S. DEPT. OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Taking the Office of Inspector General marching orders to heart – to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse in federal government programs – has been Ron Hosking’s focus for nearly 23 years. In doing so, he has continually brought credit to federal service and demonstrated a commitment to the highest standards of excellence.

Ron is a Regional Inspector General for Audit for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General. He manages audits in 10 states and three audit offices. Ron has orchestrated some of the most high-profile, highest dollar value audits in his agency. His efforts are the epitome of innovative, high impact audits that result in significantly improved efficiencies, economies, and effectiveness of government programs – while maximizing scarce government resources.

Ron has received various awards and other forms of recognition. But more importantly, he actively advocates for recognition of his staff. His efforts have proven fruitful as at least one of his staff has won a prestigious HUD-OIG national award in each of the past five years – certainly a positive reflection on Ron’s ability to develop great staff and his drive for excellence.

Maximizing resources and giving staff what they need to get the job done and done well – that’s Ron. He is a role model and outstanding mentor to his assistant regional managers. And, if there is a more efficient and effective way of doing business, Ron is in the forefront advocating for the improvement, even if he has to buck the system a bit or think way outside the box to get the right things done. He is certainly worthy of the Lifetime Achievement Award.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
DISTINGUISHED MILITARY AWARD



CAPT JOSE BELARDO
DEPUTY REGIONAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATOR
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

CAPT Jose Belardo is the Deputy Regional Health Administrator for Region VII. He is widely acknowledged as an exceptional DRHA and leader in coordinating a wide range of public health initiatives in Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa.

His professional career began as an officer in the United States Army. While in the Army, CAPT Belardo served as the Administrator for several programs at different military installations. CAPT Belardo also served as the Commander of the Headquarters and Medical Company at Reynolds Army Community Hospital, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He served as the Chief Mental Health Officer while deployed to Somalia, Africa during Operation Restore Hope before completing an inter-service transfer to the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service in June 1995.

CAPT Belardo was instrumental in initiating programs related to the Surgeon General's efforts to lower childhood obesity rates. He assembled a coalition of 15 co-sponsors for jump rope competitions across Missouri elementary schools. As a result, school systems added double-dutch to after school programs to enhance physical activity for thousands of school children. CAPT Belardo also assembled a collaborative program between four reservations and Creighton University to establish childhood obesity programs for hundreds of at-risk American Indian children.

In 2008, CAPT Belardo began leading an effort in Kansas City, KS and Kansas City, MO to address childhood obesity. He recruited five clinics to identify 500 overweight children and perform health measurements on the children and family members. Families were referred to a multi-lingual nutritionist, given six months free YMCA family memberships, and coupons for healthy food.

CAPT Belardo leads response actions to urgent public health needs. During spring 2008, he led a team on a mission to Louisiana to provide education to thousands of people who had been living in FEMA trailers. From July through December 2008, CAPT Belardo was the Public Health Team Leader on board the U.S. Kearsarge to conduct public health outreach missions in seven countries in Central and South America.

CAPT Belardo is the consummate professional, providing exemplary leadership, whether working in the office, interfacing with state and local partners, or deployed to national or international missions. His dedicated service and superb work ethic demonstrate to the World that there is no greater asset than a public serviceperson.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SAFETY AWARD



MICHAEL E. MULLEN
AIRPORT CERTIFICATION SAFETY INSPECTOR
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

In spite of travel to high-risk areas, Michael E. Mullen, Airport Certification Safety Inspector with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), is a strong proponent of public safety and has voluntarily journeyed to Iraq to help reconstitute civil aviation in that country. Not just once, but twice, he has volunteered for missions to conduct safety assessments of Iraqi airports for the purpose of determining improvements required to comply with International Civil Aviation Organization Standards.

Putting personal safety aside, when the U.S. Embassy in Iraq requested the advanced inspection of two airports, Mike voluntarily and hurriedly obtained the required clearances to enter that country. During his trips, he provided feedback describing the protective gear he wears during these inspections to shield him from the daily mortar attacks being fired into the airports and while staying in the housing that is surrounded by blast walls. On more than one occasion, the attacks were so close that he had to run to the bomb shelters for safety. Yet, that didn't stop him, and thanks to Mike's contributions, the airport assessment reports have been complete and informative—providing the Iraqi government with a roadmap to bring Iraqi airports up to international standards.

In his everyday work, Mike also remains a champion for public safety and is actively involved with the FAA's Airport Certification Program on a local and national level, as well. Always looking to improve procedures to enhance safety, on his own initiative, he recently developed detailed instructions on how to improve a data reporting software utilized by the FAA for addressing needs and concerns of our airport customers—just another example of his esteemed character and desire to improve public safety.

Whether abroad or stateside, with or without risk, Mike has demonstrated a strong desire to protect the safety of the flying public. His performance has been a credit to the FAA and the United States, and he is, without a doubt, very deserving of the 2009 Distinguished Public Safety Award.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT DISTINGUISHED TEAM AWARD

ACE RECYCLING TEAM



Team Members: (Top) Kim Curry, Carol Hogan, Cindy Townend, Debra Sanning, Karen Eastland
(Bottom) Gordon Evans, Patricia Donovan, Lori Liebsch, Chuck Basye, Gary Valleau

It's estimated that recycling just 1 ton of waste saves 17 mature trees, 7,000 gallons of water, 3 cubic yards of landfill space, 2 barrels of oil, and 4,100 kilowatt-hours of electricity—enough energy to power the average American home for 5 months. Now, take these figures and multiply that by 21.5. That's what the Federal Aviation Administration's ACE Recycling Team achieved in 2008 alone.

With an energy and excitement to protect the environment, this team created a contagious enthusiasm within the DOT building that was embraced by the building occupants in a large way. By utilizing many no-cost, low-cost marketing strategies, offering convenient disposal options and by expanding the list of recycle alternatives, the Federal workforce immediately responded, and growth in recycle activity increased by 26.5% from the previous year.

In addition to the typical paper recycling, the team added options to include aluminum, plastic, cardboard, wooden pallets, catalogs, magazines, newspapers, phonebooks, toner cartridges, cell phones and batteries. They provided greater accessibility to receptacles, established an "all-in-one" walk up recycle center, and now offer a mobile curb-side recycling service to accommodate those unusually large recycling needs. This customer-friendly approach has fostered a sense of competition and fun between divisions in their quest to eliminate waste in an environmentally-friendly manner.

This team was creative in their efforts and service-oriented in their design, but the greatest measure of their success is reflected in the overwhelming response to the recycle program by the building occupants. With significant enhancements to customer service and recycle options, participation in recycle activity has and continues to grow. While this team excelled in their efforts, their contributions also allowed all building occupants to excel—demonstrating that the Federal workforce is not only committed to serving our country, but in their quest to strengthen and protect our environment, they are also committed to improving the lives of all Americans.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
DISTINGUISHED TECHNICAL SERVICE AWARD



ROBERT E. SCHMIDT
PROJECT DIRECTOR, ROOF ASSET MANG. PROJECT
NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Robert Schmidt has functioned as an outstanding employee of the Department of Energy for 18 years as Federal Project Director for the Roof Asset Management Program (RAMP), Project Engineer, Program Director and Team Leader. He also is a devoted husband, loving father, and a man of faith.

Mr. Schmidt has developed a professional and respected working relationship among the six sites in the Nuclear Weapons Complex. His reputation and opinions are valued by NNSA contractors, federal leadership, his supervisor, team members and coworkers.

Mr. Schmidt's accomplishments include improving management of NNSA's \$370 million dollar inventory of roof assets totaling over 16 million square feet. Work performed under RAMP has added \$19.3 million in value to the NNSA roof portfolio through life extending repairs, while saving \$7 million in construction costs and eliminating \$46 million in deferred maintenance from the 2003 congressional baseline. The program has replaced 1.9 million square feet of roof with more energy efficient, sustainable roofs, resulting in energy cost savings exceeding 50%. RAMP has increased the average remaining life of the Nuclear Weapons Complex's multi-million dollar roof inventory by 25%.

Mr. Schmidt's experience dealings in the private sector have served him well in this federal position. He is a man of integrity and highest business ethics.

Mr. Schmidt is a man of valor, and has on two separate occasions during the past year, used the Heimlich maneuver to save the life of a relative and CPR to revive one elderly stroke victim in a public setting.

Mr. Schmidt has received many awards, honors, commendations and letters of recognition including the 2008 General Services Administration Achievement Award for Real Property Innovation, a National Award for Asset Management; NNSA Employee of the Quarter, First Quarter 2009; and a Letter of Recognition from Thomas D'Agostino, NNSA Administrator.

Mr. Schmidt has also obtained NNSA Project Director Level III Certification, as well as Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification. These certifications show him as a public employee who goes above and beyond what is necessary to serve our government and its citizens.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
DISTINGUISHED TRADE/CRAFT SERVICE AWARD



JOE RICARD
MATERIALS HANDLER
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Joe Ricard has contributed significantly to the development, operation and maintenance of U.S. EPA Region 7's Training and Logistics Center. Joe joined EPA in 2007 shortly after the previous U.S. EPA Region 7 warehouse was damaged by a tornado, necessitating a move to a new location. The move and setup at this new location were fraught with challenges. Because of his outstanding leadership, innovative ideas, and exceptional customer service, Joe overcame the challenges.

Before Joe was involved with the project, the construction was languishing and many specifications went unmet. Once on board, Joe immediately began monitoring the progress of the construction contractors to ensure that EPA's needs were met on schedule. Joe also proactively dealt with potential issues such as workspace layout, audio-visual station locations, lighting improvements, and backup generator and energy logistics, all with an eye toward enhancing the facility's design and layout, and improving its efficiency and functionality.

Joe continues to monitor the leaser's service obligations to ensure that EPA is receiving the "biggest bang for its buck." On a daily basis, Joe is also responsible for managing thousands of pieces of materials and equipment for the entire facility. Joe has redesigned the warehouse traffic pattern, improving the efficiency of the facility and enabling the On-Scene Coordinators to quickly locate and deploy equipment at times of emergency.

Joe Ricard's contribution to EPA goes above and beyond the norm. Not only does Joe manage the Region 7 Training and Logistics Center, but he also takes the initiative to enhance his skills and constantly seeks to further his contribution to fulfilling the Agency's mission.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
DISTINGUISHED VALOR AWARD



DAVID BRYAN
PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

David Bryan, EPA Region 7 Office of Public Affairs, is being honored for his actions in rescuing Michael Nolte, of Leawood, Kansas, from a burning vehicle on I-70 in May 2003. Nolte and Missouri State Highway Patrolman Michael Newton were sitting in a state patrol vehicle on the shoulder of the interstate when a one-ton truck veered onto the shoulder and struck the patrolman's vehicle from behind. The collision resulted in an explosion and horrific fire that fully engulfed the patrol car.

David Bryan and Troy Brinkoetter were first at the scene and were able to pull Mr. Nolte from the vehicle through the passenger side door to safety. Several attempts by the two were unable to save the patrolman. The burn physician at University of Columbia Medical Center believes Mr. Nolte would have died if it had taken just 15 seconds more.

As a result of the wreck, the United States Congress passed the federal "Pass With Care" law, requiring motorists to move over when they see flashing lights on the shoulder, thus preventing untold numbers of similar tragedies. The Missouri General Assembly approved similar legislation.

Mr. Bryan recently received the Above & Beyond Citizen Honor in ceremonies held March 25 near the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va. He was selected by the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, comprised of 105 living Medal of Honor recipients, as one of three Americans to be honored this year after a nationwide search and selection process.

He began working for EPA Region 7 in February 2008. He and his wife, Susan, have been married 31 years and have one child, Mabelle, age 23.