

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED ADMINISTRATIVE/PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AWARD



DR. CHRIS TAYLOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST  
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Dr. Chris Taylor's leadership has substantially changed the way U.S. EPA regional office buildings are operated and maintained. Under his direction, EPA Region 7 has established the first multi-site Environmental Management System and the only ISO 14001-certified office within the entire Agency. He has led enhancements of many features that have allowed the region to reduce energy and water use by more than 30 percent, and achieve a Platinum Rating under the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system under the existing building and maintenance standard.

In addition to his work on the regional office buildings' operation and maintenance, Dr. Taylor has also demonstrated success by leading the enhancement of the Region's recycling program which has resulted in an overall diversion rate of nearly fifty percent, growing its alternative transportation program, and increasing its consumption of alternative fuels, primarily E85. Because of his success in EPA Region 7, Dr. Taylor shares his sustainability knowledge and experiences with other local government agencies, such as the Kansas City, KS, Downtown Shareholders and the City of Mission, Kansas. By sharing this expertise, Dr. Taylor serves to expand and grow more conversations on sustainability and furthers the Agency's mission of protecting public health and the environment.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED CLERICAL SERVICE AWARD



MICHELE DRENNEN  
OFFICE MANAGER  
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Michele Drennen has been an office manager with the EPA for less than three years, but her list of accomplishments and contributions would seem to suggest a much longer time of service with the Agency. Because of her many skills and talents, as well as her dedication and work ethic, Michele's contributions have reached far beyond the normal duties of an office manager.

The nature of work performed in EPA's Emergency Response and Removal Program makes Michele's duties more challenging than those of most similar Agency positions. The program responds to environmental emergencies such as explosions, floods, pipeline spills, chemical spills and fires. Personnel have to travel at a moment's notice, work long hours and weekends, and prepare documents, often with little notice. In addition to these frequent challenges, the response program was without an office manager for an extended period of time. Michele selflessly took on additional duties and provided unwavering and seamless support to the program staff in both branches, serving a total of 36 employees. In spite of the doubled workload, Michele always greeted staff and customers with a smile and cheerful voice, helping them get through some trying times. Michele was extremely adept at helping staff who were particularly stressed and needed support.

Over the last two years, EPA Region 7 had to respond to several tornadoes and widespread flooding at multiple locations, and emergency response staff traveled for weeks at a time. Michele coordinated the logistic and administrative processes required to support those individuals. These events left the program shorthanded in the office, but Michele picked up the slack by carrying out many burdens normally performed by displaced staff. Michele's outstanding support and initiative enabled the program to successfully respond to these disasters, for which she was recognized with two national awards.

Perhaps Michele's most noteworthy contribution has been designing professional publications such as booklets, brochures, pamphlets and posters to communicate and promote the efforts of many EPA Region 7 programs. Michele has helped staff and programs by designing and preparing more than 90 products, resulting in several awards. These professional publications have raised the level of awareness of citizens to protect public health and the environment.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD



MARISSA AREVALO-D'AMICO  
IMMIGRATION SERVICES OFFICER  
U.S. CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGRATION SERVICES  
NATIONAL BENEFITS CENTER

On April 5, 1993, Marissa Arevalo-D'Amico arrived in Kansas City from the Philippines. She received her United States citizenship in February 1997. Eleven years later, she became an Immigration Services Officer at the National Benefits Center (NBC), United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. Highlights of her community

involvement are noted below.

Marissa volunteers with Concerned Care Inc, serves 150 mentally and physically disabled adults in the Northland. She visits group homes, and teaches life skills to residents. She recruited five co-workers to “adopt” eight ladies for the Holiday season.

Marissa taught CPR and First Aid to the transportation department of Della Lamb Community Services, which serves low-income KC families. It provides transportation to 700 school children, as well as meals on wheels and transportation to medical appointments to 150 senior citizens and 50 disabled adults.

She served as a 2009 NBC Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) Committee member and Event Coordinator. Her efforts helped raise record contributions exceeding \$115,000. The NBC received the “Highest Dollar Growth Over Last Year” award, the Silver Ace award for Leadership, and the Caring for Community award.

Marissa has hosted an exchange student from Bolivia, which later inspired her to sponsor a child from the Philippines. Marissa provides monetary assistance and maintains communications by way of letters.

For 15 years, Marissa and her family have financially sponsored and volunteered in the Philippines. They focused their efforts on the city of Bonbon’s Community outreach programs and the Elementary School. Bonbon Community serves 5,000 people. In memory of her mother, Marissa helped feed malnourished children, provided medical supplies for the health center, raised funds to build a church, and provided funds to pay for nursing school.

The NBC is proud to shine the spotlight on Marissa. Her dedication to improving the quality of life of others truly goes “above and beyond,” and defines service to our community. Marissa says that sharing her talents and blessings with others is her way of thanking America for making her dreams come true.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP AWARD

WILLIAM B. EMPSON, PE, PMP  
OPERATIONS DIVISION TECHNICAL SUPPORT BRANCH CHIEF  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS – KC DISTRICT  
*(Photo not available at time of print)*

Mr. William Empson is the Chief of the Technical Support Branch of the Operations Division, of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District. He is responsible for leading the support to operation and maintenance of 500 miles of the Missouri River, approximately 250 office and field personnel and 18 lakes in Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri and Iowa that serve 15 million recreating visitors per year. Mr. Empson is on call 24 hours a day in support of emergency communication and public safety at Corps of Engineers lakes.

In addition to his routine duties, Mr. Empson led the development and implementation of an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act program of approximately \$100 million on over 400 individual tasks and line items. The total program budget implemented in 2009 was approximately three times the normal budget for the Division.

In 2009, Mr. Empson was also recognized for his leadership as the senior project manager on the Tuttle Creek Dam Safety Assurance Project Delivery Team. The team completed a construction project that protected 13,000 people from failure of a dam in Manhattan, Kansas. The project was completed two years ahead of schedule and \$75 million under budget. This time and cost saving was achieved through development of a new technology that had never been used before to stabilize a dam. Mr. Empson recently returned from a special deployment to Iraq where he was the team leader of a group of dam safety experts assisting the Iraqi Ministry of Water Resources to reduce risk to the Iraqi public from high risk dams in the country. This was Mr. Empson's second deployment to Iraq to assist in protection of Iraqi water resources and public safety.

In 2009, Mr. Empson received the Superior Civilian Service Award, the third highest civilian service honorary medal offered by the Department of Defense. He has also received a letter of commendation from the Northwestern Division Commander and Corps of Engineers Headquarters Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



JANICE J. KROONE  
ON-SCENE COORDINATOR  
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

For more than 30 years, Janice Kroone has demonstrated an uncommon commitment to public service through her career at EPA, her military service, and other acts of personal sacrifice. Janice has served as an On-Scene Coordinator for EPA since 1989. In this capacity, she has responded to chemical releases, oil spills, natural disasters, and terrorism events. Whatever the threat or challenge, Janice is ready and willing to respond.

In addition to her career at EPA, Janice has served in the military for 33 years. Following six years of Air Force active duty, she spent eight years with the Army National Guard, and the next 19 years with the Air National Guard. Janice has earned the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and has received two Humanitarian Service Medals for medical missions to Honduras and for medical assistance to Indian Tribes.

Last year, Janice again demonstrated her commitment to public service through participation in a stem cell donation program. This program required Janice to travel to a facility in Virginia, be quarantined, and endure a series of injections over a one-week period which caused her to be extremely ill. This kind of self-sacrifice for the common good of humanity is what makes Janice a remarkable public servant.

Janice J. Kroone is the epitome of a public servant. She is skilled, resourceful and dedicated beyond measure. She exhibits the highest standards of excellence in her professional life and her personal life as she seeks to serve the best interest of the public.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED MILITARY AWARD



LCDR TRACY BRANCH  
REGIONAL MINORITY HEALTH COORDINATOR  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

LCDR Tracy Branch is a Commissioned Officer in the United States Public Health Service. She is assigned to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service in Kansas City, and serves as the Regional Minority Health Coordinator. LCDR Branch is nationally recognized as a strong leader in the field of public health. She provides leadership and guidance on all aspects of the planning, establishment, direction, coordination, and advocacy of policies, programs, and activities that deal with multi-cultural and multi-ethnic health system issues, which are extremely complex.

LCDR Branch has initiated a variety of programs which are directly related to the Surgeon General's efforts to eliminate racial/ethnic disparities in health. Her accomplishments in the field of public are rich and numerous. As a member of the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences' Score One for Health Program Advisory Committee, a program that brings health screenings to underserved inner city elementary school children, her problem solving skills recently resulted in the continuance of this program, which provides medical screenings and referrals for 17,000 urban core youth annually. She collaborates with the Mexican Consulate of Kansas City on the Bi-National Health Week initiative, a program that impacts 11 communities and reaching over 3500 Latinos in Kansas and Missouri by providing health screenings and referral services, and prevention education services. LCDR Branch has organized Grant Writing Workshops for Native American Tribes in Kansas and Nebraska during Tribal Consultation Meetings.

In addition to her numerous duties and accomplishments, LCDR Branch serves as an Adjunct Clinical Professor Univ. of Missouri at Kansas City School of Pharmacy; Maintains clinical competence by performing a minimum of 2 Family Medicine Clinics monthly at the Kansas City Free Health Clinic; and is actively pursuing a Doctorate of Education with a projected graduation of 2011.

LCDR Branch provides critical leadership to the region in the areas of public health and health disparities. Her officership personifies professional excellence and sets the benchmark for the U.S. Public Health Services' core values. Her unwavering dedication and passion to improve the health status of underserved populations throughout the region and to the mission of the Commissioned Corps of the USPHS is truly exemplary.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SAFETY AWARD



KIRK M. PRICE  
CIVIL ENGINEER  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

Kirk Price is an active advocate for the flying public. As a Civil Engineer for the Federal Aviation Administration, he is involved in projects that keep passengers and pilots safe not only when they are in the air, but when they are on the runways and taxiways of airports. Kirk is a key part of improving the pilot's options for landing at airports by improving ground based facilities giving them navigational signals. His efforts for better project management and problem diagnosis of Airport Traffic Control Tower windows has eased the controller's ability to see airplanes during rapidly changing temperatures.

Within the last year, Kirk worked as a lead to both design and performed the hands-on installation of critical upgrades to four poor performing VOR air navigational facilities; completing them within very aggressive and intense time schedules of 3-5 weeks per site. Included was the DuPage, Illinois location which alone serves 20 different instrument approaches into Chicago and affects air traffic operation and efficiency for the entire country.

As a member of the Runway Safety Action Team since the 1990's, Kirk has played a pivotal role in improving airport runway safety in a four state region and has worked to reduce potential runway incursions between FAA personnel and airplanes through projects to move FAA equipment access road locations away from active runways. He is an integral member of airport inspection teams for improving runway safety

Kirk is also the Central Service Area Expert and go-to engineer when Air Traffic controllers have problems with cracked or fogging window glass in the control cab that can affect their ability to safely manage and control Air Traffic. With special equipment he convinced the agency to procure for this frequent need, he is able to conduct on-site frost point testing of problematic windows to determine causes/solutions as well as remaining useable life span of the glass.

Along with a wealth of experience, technical knowledge, and expertise, his friendly and supportive attitude, willingness to take on any task, and fun-loving nature all combine to make him both a valued co-worker and an invaluable asset to the Agency.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED TEAM AWARD



TUTTLE CREEK DAM SAFETY ASSURANCE PROJECT DELIVERY TEAM  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

The Tuttle Creek Dam Safety Assurance Project Delivery Team was formed to address the risk of failure of Tuttle Creek dam during an earthquake. The dam is upstream of Manhattan, Kansas and over 13,000 people live in over 6,900 homes in the valley downstream of the dam.

The 13 year, \$276 million Tuttle creek dam safety project was exceptionally complex and involved the largest ground modification project on an operational dam anywhere in the world.

The team continuously coordinated with State and local agencies to ensure that the community was well informed as the project moved forward and emergency response personnel were prepared to respond should an earthquake occur before construction was completed. This coordination included construction of a state of the art dam failure public warning system a simulated earthquake exercise with the local community.

During construction, the team implemented several process improvements and developed an innovative technology to add cement and recycled steel mill slag to the soil. Because of these innovations that had never been used before to stabilize a dam before, the schedule of the project was reduced by two years and the project was completed a minimum of \$75 million under the original budget.

Additionally, during construction of the dam modifications five of the team members deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan in support of the global war on terror while those that remained in the US covered their duties during deployment.

In recognition of their efforts, the team received the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Project Delivery Team of the year Excellence award recognizing them as the premium example of project delivery in the Corps of Engineers in 2009.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED TECHNICAL SERVICE AWARD



DANIEL PERKINS  
IT SPECIALIST/SECTION 508 COORDINATOR  
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

The GSA Section 508 Coordinator team wishes to acknowledge the outstanding contributions of Dan Perkins, for his efforts to help improve the state of it accessibility for employees with disabilities in the General Services Administration.

Dan is a blind employee and expert user of the Jaws screen reading software. In 2009, Dan was appointed Section 508 Coordinator for the Office of the Chief Information Officer. In this role, Dan works with GSA staff offices to ensure agency conformance to Section 508 law.

Widely known and respected amongst his colleagues, Dan manages the accessibility testing center where a variety of highly specialized testing, random sampling and remediation efforts to support the agency are underway. Agency employees attest that Dan exceeds their expectations by providing ongoing individual and group support to ensure compliance of websites, applications, software, documents and other it related entities. Dan is a significant resource for 508 compliance matters, and has worked with numerous federal agencies to leverage his expertise in Section 508 implementation, training, and other offerings that support conformance, which only further advances the way GSA employees create accessible electronic and information technology.

Dan has received numerous accolades for the contributions he makes to assist staff offices across GSA regions, and his efforts to ensure what the agency develops, procures, maintains or uses is accessible to persons with disabilities. Given that Dan is a blind user who has overcome the barriers and challenges often prevalent in the world of the disabled, we are very honored and proud to have Dan on our team, and value his ongoing contributions to ensure GSA's electronic and information technology is fully accessible to persons with disabilities. To his credit, employees across the agency are more cognizant and engaged in the Section 508 program mission, as well as the benefits it brings not only to agency employees with disabilities, but the public at large.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED TRADE/CRAFT SERVICE AWARD



DANIEL W. HENDERSON  
GENERAL EQUIPMENT MECHANIC  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Daniel W. Henderson began his career with the federal government in December 1985 when he accepted a position with the Corps of Engineers as a General Equipment Mechanic at the Pomona Lake Project, Kansas City District. Dan has been involved in numerous projects and improvements to the Pomona Lake Project during his tenure. He has excelled in maintaining the Project's vehicles, vessels, facilities, and equipment. He has utilized his skill and knowledge to operate and maintain the utilities involved with four full service campgrounds and over 300 campsites on Pomona Project.

Mr. Henderson's real passion is for the safety of the visitors and staff working at the projects. This does not just include the Pomona Lake Project that he is stationed at, but all projects throughout the Kansas City District. Mr. Henderson has served on several District Safety Inspection or Accident teams and usually serves on two to three a year. He is requested for these teams due to his ability to recognize safety issues and knowledge on how to make corrections in a reasonable manner. Dan has been the Safety Officer at the Pomona Lake Project for over 15 years. He has also served as acting Safety Officer for the Melvern Lake Project, which he continues to provide technical expertise to. These two projects serve over 980,000 public visitors each year.

Mr. Henderson has been a leader in electrical safety with his broad knowledge of electrical codes and systems. He has been working with the new electrical safety program concerning arc flash. He has evaluated various electrical components to minimize the risk of arc flash incidents. He completes annual inspections of the project to insure the safe working conditions of the electrical systems. During a recent inspection he discovered a defective exterior receptacle that most likely prevented a major accident from occurring on the project.

Mr. Henderson is a Public Employee that is dedicated to his job and one that strives to insure everyone's safety.

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED VALOR AWARD



JAMES WATT  
SHUTTLE BUS DRIVER  
KANSAS CITY VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

James “Jim” Watt is a gentle spirit with a genuinely warm and caring heart. He is a Vietnam-Era Veteran (United States Army) and has worked at Kansas City VA Medical Center for 3 years. When asked about the work that he does, he simply stated, “This is my life.” It is evident that he enjoys his job by the way he interacts with visitors to the Medical Center as well as other employees. As a Motor Vehicle Operator in the Facilities Management Service, Jim greets everyone with a kind word and a smile. He is a selfless individual and doesn’t talk much about himself; rather, he is sincerely interested in others.

On September 10, 2009, while performing his duties as a KCVA Shuttle Driver, Jim went and exhibited valor and composure under pressure to help save the life of a Veterans Affairs patient. When the patient was exiting the shuttle, he suddenly became visibly stricken, collapsed down the stairs toward the parking lot pavement. Jim immediately sprang into action quickly addressing his dire condition and securing the patient onboard. He cleared traffic and raced the Veteran patient to the emergency department entrance where 8 to 10 emergency room staff responded and resuscitated the patient in distress. According to one of the attending nurses, “There is no way this man’s life could have been saved without Mr. Watt’s quick and decisive action.” The patient who survived the horrific ordeal responded sometime later: “I was extremely lucky that Jim was there when I needed him the most.”

A “Son of the Midwest,” Jim was born and raised in Kansas City, MO and is the proud father of 4 adult children. In his spare time, he enjoys collecting classic and antique cars. He is also an avid motorcycle enthusiast. Jim Watt is the epitome of humility, friendliness, and kindness.

Indeed, Jim went above and beyond the call of his duties he was assigned for and is definitely deserving of the 2010 Public Employees Recognition Day Valor Award.