AMARILLO FIELD OFFICE
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

June 2014

Volume 1, Issue 6

Eye on the Panhandle

Fillmore's Facelift in Phases

Musical Chairs for New Carpet and Paint

The Fillmore Office is currently undergoing a major facelift. The project is being managed by Brad Hayworth, Supply Technician in the Support Services Division.

What started as simple carpet replacement evolved into painting of the entire office. "When we were planning the carpet replacement, it occurred to us that the office had not been painted in over five years, so now was the perfect time to get that done, too," Brad said.

Starting on May 19, 2014, a crew from the Pat Davis Company began replacing the carpet and painting the walls. That requires dismantling cubicles and relocating file cabinets, file boxes, and all manner of equipment and supplies. The crew started at the west end of the building, laying the carpet in a south to north direction. The crew will work in three phases, starting with Resources, then Operations and Engineering, and finally finishing with the Field Manager's Office and Support Services on the east end. That means that each staff member has to relocate to an empty cubicle so his/her cubicle could be broken down and moved.

Carole James was surrounded by boxes and supplies as she prepared to temporarily relocate. *Photo by Brad Hayworth*

Once the cubicles are dismantled, the paint crew comes in after hours to paint; the following morning the carpet layers lay the carpet, then the furniture people come in and reinstall the cubicles. Once a cubicle is installed, the employee is able to move back in.

"We expect to finish the project by late June. When it's all done, it will be like we have a new office," Brad said.

Equipment and supplies from the Division of Resources were stacked away in a corner during Phase 1 of the renovation. *Photo by Brad Hayworth*

Brad also arranged for a recycling company to come in and take away e-waste, such as old CRT monitors, TVs, old computers, cell phones, etc. The recycle company was STS Recycling, an R2 certified recycler.

This project came on the heels of the massive records packing and shipping project, in which 190 boxes of AmFO records were packed up and shipped to the Federal Records Center. Following that effort, 21 full-sized file cabinets were moved out of the Fillmore Office space. That, my friends, is a LOT of paper!

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Field Manager's Blog

On Partnerships ...

This month's edition of the *Eye on the Panhandle* includes many reminders of the work that we do with partners, both in and outside of the federal government.

The Cross Bar Outdoor Classroom involved key partnerships with Caprock High School, West Texas A&M University, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Parks Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Joe Peterson's team in the Division of Helium Resources is actually a component of the New Mexico State Office (NMSO) Division of Minerals, directed by Sheila Mallory, Deputy State Director for Minerals. In the Women's History Month celebration, Sheila's role as a panel member, and Zella Ratliffe's role as the moderator, showed how seemingly invisible our partnerships can be through shared work space and collegiality.

Although we think of Sharon Bryant as a member of our AmFO family, she represents a partnership between the AmFO and the National Operations Center, Division of Information Resource Management.

I am very pleased and proud that we can highlight these achievements in our newsletter.

In addition to these activities, you probably know that the Leadership Team and I have been spending a significant amount of time planning the implementation of the Helium Stewardship Act of 2013, as well as responding to the 2013 Compliance Assessment Safety, Health, and the Environment (CASHE) report of the Cliffside Plant.

The AmFO cannot undertake these activities alone. "It takes a village" comprised of:

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AmFO Celebrates Women's History Month

"Celebrating Women of Character, Courage, and Commitment"

Participants in the panel discussion for Women's History Month were (from left) Roya Mortazavi, Lead Chemist from the Division of Helium Resources; Patrycia Sanchez, Writer-Editor from the Field Manager's Office; Glenda Briscoe, Assistant Field Manager from the Division of Support Services, and Sheila Mallory, Deputy State Director for Minerals from the New Mexico State Office. *Photo by Sharon Bryant*

On May 1, 2014, the staff of the Amarillo Field Office observed Women's History Month with a panel discussion featuring members of the BLM staff. The panelists were Sheila Mallory, Deputy State Director for Minerals at the New Mexico State Office; Glenda Briscoe, AFM for Support Services; Roya Mortazavi, Lead Chemist from the Division of Helium Resources; and Patrycia (Pat) Sanchez, Writer-Editor from the Field Manager's Office.

Every year, the President designates March as Women's History Month. This year's theme was "Celebrating Women of Character, Courage and Commitment."

Zella Ratliffe, Helium Resource Technician and Diversity Coordinator for the AmFO, moderated the event. She asked the panel members four questions: What brought you to the Federal government? Who was your mentor or did you have a mentor? Did you have to deal with the mentality of a male dominated work force? What advice would you give to someone wanting advancement?

The four panel members represented very different backgrounds and viewpoints, which made for a lively and thought-provoking hour. In responding to the questions, they offered the perspectives of professional women at various stages of their careers; the challenges of parenting on their professional and career development; for Sheila and Roya, the challenges of succeeding in scientific professions; and, for Roya and Pat, the perspective of women of color in the federal workforce.

On Partnerships ...

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> Our own team, both at Fillmore and at Cliffside and the Cross Bar;
> Staff from the NMSO involved in Occupational Safety and Health, Air Quality, Environmental Protection/ HAZMAT, Engineering, and Human Resources;
> Staff from the various Divisions of the Washington Office; and
> Staff from the Solicitor's Office.

We have long-standing partnerships in the operation of the Cliffside Helium Plant. These include representatives from the United Steelworker's International Union Local 13-487; members of the Cliffside Refiners Limited Partnership (CRLP); owners of the surrounding land; and various offices of the Potter County government.

Clearly, we cannot get our work done without partnerships. We are each other's customers, and each other's partners.

IT Transformation
Modernizing Mission Support with 21st Century IT

In 2009, shortly after becoming the Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar asked a simple question: "Why can't I send an email to all DOI employees?"

At that time, most of the DOI was still using Lotus Notes, a system that could not accommodate such an email request across all DOI Bureaus and Offices. All of the Bureaus and Offices were following their own IT path, and each had dedicated staffs to manage the rapidly-changing world of technology and communication.

On December 14, 2010, Secretary Salazar signed Secretarial Order #3309 to align all IT resources under a single Chief Information Officer (CIO), and thus was born the IT Transformation (ITT) Initiative in the Department of the Interior.

The goals of the ITT are to: enhance how employees of the Department communicate and collaborate with each other, external stakeholders, and the public; facilitate the availability and sharing of timely, relevant, and useable information for improved decision-making; offer flexible workplace solutions that allow employees to perform their duties from any location; improve the public's experience with IT services and products; deliver IT services in a more cost efficient and transparent manner; and support and promote the Department's mission and high priority initiatives.

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A Day in the Life of Sharon Bryant

From computers to phones to moves

Hi All,

The network at Cliffside is down. Verizon is working to restore the service as quickly as possible. It looks like it is a router issue. Cliffside is still able to receive and make telephone calls.

Thx - Sharon

So started a recent day for Sharon Bryant, IT Specialist and Desktop Support in Zone 1 of the National Operations Center's Division of Information Resource Management (DIRM).

Sharon's Role in IT Transformation

Effective October 6, 2013, 183 IT professionals from across the BLM were consolidated into the National Operations Center, DIRM. These employees now belong to one of three zones in the DIRM to provide Bureauwide infrastructure support; Sharon Bryant was assigned to Zone 1. This was a part of the Department of Interior's Information Technology (IT) Transformation Initiative as outlined in Secretarial Order 3309. (See sidebar article.)

In the new centralized DIRM, the Desktop Support Staff are assigned tickets from the Remedy-8 System at the National Help Desk. However, although Sharon is assigned to the NOC-DIRM, her salary is paid out of the helium funds in the Amarillo Field Office budget for the remainder of the fiscal year. Therefore, she is dedicated to the AmFO at least until October, rather than being assigned to other BLM offices' tasks.

From desktops to phones to security…

For the most part, Sharon's duties involve computers, communications, and security. The AmFO is fortunate to have many of the new technologies, and Sharon is the go-to person for tapping into them.

Sharon's role in onboarding a new employee gives an idea of the wide variety of tasks she encounters in any given day. When a new employee comes to the AmFO, she must set up the computer system account, hardware, and software. If the employee is new to the Department of Interior, she sets up a user ID for the email coming through Denver. She creates and assigns network accounts and assigns network printers.

The employee may need access to specialized network software, such as the software used by Engineering or GIS, so Sharon sets that up. She also assigns the employee in the appropriate mailing groups, such as Cliffside, Engineering, All Employees, etc. Sharon also creates and tests the building access cards. If the employee needs an assigned BLM cell phone, Sharon arranges for that, as well.

"Most employees have experience in setting up a personal computer at home; home PCs usually come with all of the components and cables in the box, and you just plug it all in," Sharon said. "So employees can set up their own computers if they are comfortable doing it. However, I have found that people aren't always comfortable setting up a computer, or they are afraid to mess with government-owned equipment and networks. I'm always happy to help, especially for a new employee."

Sharon Bryant looks at home surrounded by computers and paper. *Photo by Brad Hayworth*

Sharon is responsible for the telephone system. "Most phones can be plugged in anywhere," she said. "But I do have to set up the phone number and make sure it works."

Sharon also trains the employee on using the phone system, such as programming or accessing custom features, and for monitoring and assisting with government cell phones.

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Thoughts on Leadership… Cultivating your "Garden"

Setting up the workplace for success is a lot like setting up a garden for the harvest.

Prepare the ground. Unless the ground is cultivated, your harvest may not be as bountiful as it could be. The seeds may never have a chance to survive. *Employees need an environment that is well-prepared, and they need to be nurtured and challenged for professional and personal growth.*

Plant when the season is right. The wise farmer knows all about timing. *State your expectations from the onset: your organization's mission, core values and the role of the employee in the overall success of the organization.*

Know the landscape. Even with a small piece of garden you would be surprised by how different parts are better for different crops. *Different employees have different needs and perspectives about life. Knowing the differences helps in creating a complementary team.*

When plants are not doing well, don't blame them. The farmer finds out whether they lack water or nutrients or if there are diseases and/or insects. *When employees are not doing well, you want to know whether it's something you can control.*

Be prepared for change. Farmers have done their best only to see pests, drought, or other natural events bring their labor to nothing. *Today's employees are faced with unexpected challenges, constant change, stiff competition, and attractive reasons to leave. Have a succession plan.*

Forgive yourself. A farmer must learn to leave past disap-pointments behind in order to prepare his garden for future planting and harvest. *When mistakes happen, you cannot blame yourself forever. The business and the employees need you to adapt and move on.*

Learn from others. Farmers exchange valuable information including best planting times of the season, and best crops for certain areas. *Other leaders might be your best source of practical tips on how to address your concerns as a manager.*

A Day in the Life of Sharon Bryant

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"In addition to cell phones, we also have special satellite-based phones for employees who may be outside a typical cellular network, and sometimes we just have a need for cell phones with prepaid minutes. I take care of all that," she explained.

"Other related duties …"

As a long-time member of the AmFO, Sharon knows and understands many of the support systems, such as mail and records, in addition to IT. She opens and distributes the mail to the AmFO staff, and she was a key member of the team that recently packed and shipped 190 boxes of files to the Federal Records Center. Of course, Sharon's regular job with the NOC-DIRM does not involve mail or records management, so she will not be doing them in the long-term. We are very grateful for her help and support in these critical functions.

Sharon's Day

On the day she was interviewed for this article, Sharon began the day checking system reports to make sure software was working properly and the computers were connecting with the servers. She then got the news that the Cliffside network was down, and she had to monitor the progress throughout the day until the network was back up. Meanwhile, she was continuing to conduct inventory of equipment, and also had to manage the impact of Denver-level network issues, troubleshooting when necessary.

The Fillmore Office renovation kept her busy, as each employee's computer system and telephone had to be moved. That required Sharon to maneuver in, around, and under desks, and move equipment from one end of the office to the other.

She helped to set up the safety video for the Employee Staff Meeting, took pictures of the day's events, and, of course, attended the meeting.

Sharon's job requires stretching and straining under desks to manage computer connections. *Photo by Brad Hayworth*

IT Transformation

Modernizing Mission Support with 21st Century IT

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The ITT would result in many new and improved services, including: one email system for the entire Department with enhanced features; improved customer service through a new consolidated customer care center; and flexibility for bureaus and programs to choose mobile technologies that meet their needs.

The BLM began unveiling its strategic plan for the ITT in May 2013. The plan calls for consolidation of many functions in the Washington Office and States under the National Operations Center (NOC.) Desktop, IT Security, Configuration Management, Infrastructure Network Support, System Administration (SA) functions, Telecommunications, and IRM management positions (IRM Chiefs) are all being consolidated. The transition organization includes three zones for these IT services. States are still responsible for FOIA, Privacy Act management, records management, radio, and local mission applications.

The BLM's expects to save approximately $30 million annually in IT/IRM costs beginning in FY 2015 through the ITT. Like many of the BLM recent centralization initiatives (such as many human resources services), most employees are remaining in their home State and Field Offices and are being remotely managed and supervised. More details can be found at https://blmspace.blm.doi.net/oc/intra/dirm/Pages/IT-Transformation.aspx.

Public Land in North Texas Serves as Outdoor Classroom for Local High School Students

By Paul McGuire

As part of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) "Hands on the Land" youth initiative, the BLM Amarillo Field Office hosted an "outdoor classroom" for local high school students on the Cross Bar Ranch, May 20, 2014.

The Cross Bar is a 12,000-acre area of public land near Amarillo, Texas, managed by the BLM for its ecological and recreational values.

Students spent much of the past school year learning about native plant and animal species in north Texas. The Cross Bar field trip was designed to reinforce those lessons and highlight the conservation challenges associated with managing natural resources. They spent the day engaged in various hands-on learning activities about habitats, behavior, physiology, and more.

Natural Resources Specialist Adrian Escobar, who manages the Cross Bar, said, "It's imperative that we educate and excite young people about the importance and value of our public lands. They will be the ones who inherit our stewardship responsibility going forward."

Another goal of the project is to raise public awareness about the management potential of the Cross Bar, according to Escobar. In addition to conservation and restoration initiatives, the Cross Bar also supports many recreational activities and educational endeavors.

The outing was a joint project with Caprock High School. Key partners supporting the project included West Texas A&M University, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Parks Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Each partner organization provided student and/or professional volunteers to deliver expert instruction. *Paul McGuire is the Public Affairs Specialist for AmFO and OK, (405) 790-1009*

BLM Natural Resources Specialist Adrian Escobar point out some remarkable features of the Cross Bar to local high school students. *Photo by Paul McGuire*

From the blog of Katherine Archuleta, Director, Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

At the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, we know how important it is to take care of all aspects of the health of our Federal family and their loved ones at every stage of life. May [was] Mental Health Awareness Month. To be at our best at work, at home, and in our communities, we need to be mentally and physically healthy. If not addressed, reactions to stress, mental illness or substance abuse can disrupt our lives and the lives of those we love. The good news is that help is available and treatment works. Don't be afraid to reach out to those you believe need help. Sometimes all it takes to avert a crisis is offering to connect a struggling friend, family member or co-worker with assistance.

I want to make sure that every employee knows where to turn if the need arises. Our Employee Assistance Program has trained counselors available 24/7 at 800-222-0364 to help with individual, family or workplace problems. Marital difficulty, parenting challenges, financial stresses, grief and work performance concerns are among the many issues EAP addresses daily. If short term counseling is not enough, EAP can provide referrals for ongoing care. All services are confidential and free of charge.

Federal employees, retirees and families can also access mental health services through their Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) plans.

Sadly, in the last few years we have mourned the loss of too many Americans who take their own lives. The National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 800-273-TALK (8255) provides immediate assistance, connecting callers to a trained counselor at a local crisis center anytime day or night. As with any other emergency, if someone is in immediate danger, call 911.

I know that mental health can be difficult to talk about, but starting the conversation is critical to taking care of ourselves, supporting each other and saving lives.