

DHS TODAY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

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DHS TODAY is a weekly employee e-newsletter produced by the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Public Affairs.

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I. One-Year Anniversary Message To Employees From Secretary Ridge

As we commemorate the one-year anniversary of the Department of Homeland Security, I would like to thank you for the tremendous work and tireless commitment that has made our first year together a great success. The fact that we have not only come together so effectively around a shared mission, but that our country is more secure and better prepared is in large part due to the sacrifices, long hours, and dedication given by each of you.

In the space of one year, our work together has yielded an impressive record of accomplishment, and I am pleased to report that we completed the department's first high-level Strategic Plan, which includes a vision, mission, and strategic goals and objectives that provide the framework for the tactics used to carry out daily operations. Today, the department is compelled by a new vision of preserving our freedoms and protecting America – a vision that will shape the accomplishments we celebrate next year at this time, and many years into the future.

We all know that the road to a secure nation is not a short one, but it is one that holds new challenges that we must rise to meet, and new opportunities for all of us to make a difference in the lives of our fellow citizens. The next year for the department will be an important one and we

must challenge ourselves and our partners to take already extraordinary efforts to the next level so that we can further expand and push a vast agenda for a truly strategic homeland security effort.

I am grateful for the resolve and responsibility shown by all of you, and I ask that we continue to work together as we face the great challenge of challenging times. Thank you again for your selfless service throughout the first year of this department.

Sincerely,

Secretary Tom Ridge

Secretary Ridge's [One-Year Anniversary Speech](http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=3204), delivered at George Washington University on Feb. 23, is available online at: <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=3204>. The [Strategic Plan](http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/theme_home1.jsp) is available online at: http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/theme_home1.jsp. Highlights of the department's [year-one accomplishments](http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=3241) are available online at: <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=3241>.

II. Department Expands Information Exchange System

As part of its Homeland Security Information Network initiative, DHS announced on Feb. 24 the expansion of its computer-based counterterrorism communications system to all 50 states, five territories, Washington, D.C., and 50 major urban areas to strengthen its flow of threat information.

This communications capability will deliver to states and major urban areas real-time interactive connectivity with the DHS Homeland Security Operations Center through the Joint Regional Information Exchange System (JRIES). This secure system will significantly strengthen the flow of real-time threat information at the Sensitive-but-Unclassified (SBU) level to all users immediately, and provides the platform for future classified SECRET communications to the state level. This collaborative communications environment, developed by state and local authorities, will allow all states and major urban areas to collect and disseminate information between federal, state, and local agencies involved in combating terrorism.

“The Homeland is more secure when each hometown is more secure,” said Secretary Ridge. “Better information that is shared and understood faster between the federal government and our state and local partners is the way to achieve that security, and this technology system delivers on our promise of an ever more effective partnership.”

Each state and major urban area's Homeland Security Advisor will receive software licenses, technology, and training to participate in this Homeland Security Information Network for information sharing and situational awareness. Under the leadership of state and local homeland security advisors, the broadened JRIES community of users will include Adjutant Generals (National Guard), State Emergency Operations Centers, local emergency services providers including firefighters, law enforcement, and others. Future program expansion will include the county level, communication at the classified SECRET level, and the involvement of the private sector. The expanded JRIES system will continue to support the law enforcement and intelligence counterterrorism mission, and will also provide communications, collaboration, and information exchange between DHS and other Federal agencies and local partners.

III. Secretary Ridge Announces U.S.-Mexico Border Safety and Security Initiatives

Secretary Tom Ridge and the Mexican Secretary of the Interior Santiago Creel on Feb. 20 agreed on significant border safety and security initiatives in bilateral meetings in Mexico City. These agreements preserve the free flow of \$630 million in trade across the U.S./Mexico border every day while maintaining the integrity of the border. The United States and Mexico further agree to jointly and vigorously fight alien smuggling rings and to prosecute those who perpetrate these crimes.

“We are dedicated to one goal: to protect the American and Mexican people from the threat of terrorism,” said Secretary Ridge following the meeting.

Secretaries Ridge and Creel agreed to:

- Sign the 2004 U.S.-Mexico Action Plan for Cooperation and Border Safety
- Sign a Memorandum of Understanding on the Safe, Orderly, Dignified and Human Repatriation of Mexican Nationals
- Ensure the expansion of Secure Electronic Network for Traveler’s Rapid Inspection (SENTRI) lanes at six additional land ports of entry this year
- Ensure the expansion of Free and Secure Trade (FAST) lanes at five additional land ports of entry on the southern border this year

Secretary Ridge and Secretary Creel last met in November 2003 in Washington, D.C. This is Secretary Ridge’s first visit to Mexico as Secretary of Homeland Security. He last visited the country as Assistant to the President for Homeland Security in March of 2002.

A fact sheet on the U.S-Mexico Bilateral meeting appears on the DHS website at: <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=3194>.

IV. DHS Issues First Radiological and Nuclear Detectors Standards

The Science and Technology division on Feb. 27 adopted its first radiological and nuclear detectors standards, which were developed in partnership with the Department’s Office of Domestic Preparedness. These standards are designed to assist federal agencies, state and local officials, and manufacturers in procurement decisions related to radiological and nuclear detection equipment. These guidelines provide performance standards and test methods, as well as minimum characteristics for four classes of radiation detection equipment ranging from hand-held alarming detectors to radiation portal monitors for cargo containers. Officials receiving DHS grants through the Office of Domestic Preparedness will use these standards as technical guidance on performance specifications for detectors.

“Secretary Ridge and I are delighted to release the Department’s standards for radiological and nuclear detectors,” said Dr. Charles McQueary, Under Secretary, Science and Technology. “We know these guidelines will be helpful to homeland security officials and first responders across the nation as they use technology to protect themselves and our citizens from these potential threats.”

The standards reflect the continuing support of a multi-year program in Homeland Security's Science and Technology division, managed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, to develop detection equipment for use by federal, state and local employees for the detection of radiological and nuclear material. The four standards documents, which list performance specifications for radiation detectors, are available from IEEE (www.ieee.org) and from ANSI (webstore.ansi.org).

"The Department, through Customs and Border Protection, has already moved forward with deploying state of the art radiation detection technologies at key installations on our nation's borders. These standards will facilitate our ability to ensure that equipment meets rigorous standards, and supports the quick deployment of the best equipment available," said Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security Asa Hutchinson.

V. Terrorism Course Better Prepares Capital-Area Officials

Hospital administrators, state and local emergency management and law enforcement officers, college security personnel, Army officers, Secret Service officials, and staff from such federal offices as the State Department, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Energy came together this week for a FEMA course to increase their awareness about terrorism.

The 150 participants, who attended the one-day course at FEMA's National Emergency Training Center (NETC), in Emmitsburg, Md., also discussed how their respective organizations can work together to strengthen overall terrorism preparedness and response in Washington, D.C., Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Delaware.

The course taught officials how to identify suspicious circumstances and how to protect critical assets, and to know what to expect during a federal response to such an event.

The course brought home to many of the participants the severity of the threat situation and how they may be impacted by a response – even if they are not directly involved, such as hospitals in areas somewhat removed from where an actual event might occur.

The NETC, which includes experts from both the Emergency Management Institute and the National Fire Academy, offers a variety of terrorism-related courses each year and holds regular networking meetings for National Capital-area emergency services personnel as part of an overall Homeland Security mission to enhance terrorism response capabilities.

VI. Salvage Operations for Lee III Continue

The U.S. Coast Guard continued to work closely with contracted crews in the recovery and salvage of the Lee III, in Southwest Pass, 50 miles south of New Orleans. The identity of the crewmember recovered from the Lee III on Feb. 23 was confirmed as that of Able Seaman Lawrence Glass, 65, of Mobile, Ala. The two other crewmen who were located in the vessel by divers could not be removed from the Lee III due to dangerous currents.

The 178-foot offshore supply vessel Lee III sank soon after it and the Zim Mexico III, a 534-foot Antiguan-flagged cargo ship, collided in the Mississippi Delta, about 60 miles south of New

Orleans. At least 100 Coast Guard personnel have been involved in this case since the morning of Feb. 21.

"This is an extremely challenging operation given the size of the vessel and high water levels on the Mississippi River," said Capt. Ron Branch, commanding officer of the Coast Guard's Marine Safety Office and Captain of the Port in New Orleans. "Every effort is being made to complete the recovery and salvage operations and reopen the river to maritime traffic in a timely and safe manner."

Environmental response workers have recovered about 630 gallons of diesel fuel using skimmers and absorbent boom. The recovery and salvage timeline estimates have been and will continue to be influenced by river and weather conditions. U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office New Orleans is investigating the cause of the incident.

VII. CBP Border Patrol Seizes Over 900 Pounds of Cocaine

Value more than \$31 million

On Feb. 19, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Border Patrol agents assigned to the McAllen Sector's Falfurrias, Tex., Border Patrol checkpoint seized over 900 pounds of cocaine with an estimated value more than \$31,795,000.

CBP Border Patrol agents were conducting immigration checkpoint operations when a driver of a tractor-trailer approached the checkpoint. The driver exhibited very nervous behavior. During questioning, the agent noticed that the trailer had a personal lock on the trailer doors instead of a company seal. A Border Patrol canine unit conducted a routine, non-intrusive "sniff" of the truck and trailer. The canine alerted to the rear of the trailer.

In the secondary inspection area, agents began a search and discovered several boxes of cabbage. On the top layer of one of the pallets, agents could see several cellophane-wrapped bundles. Agents discovered 40 bundles of a white, powdery substance that tested positive for cocaine. The driver, tractor-trailer, and narcotics were remanded to the custody of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

"Our Border Patrol traffic checkpoints are a critical enforcement tool for carrying out the mission of securing the nation's borders," said McAllen Sector Chief Patrol Agent Ramon T. Ortega. "Our agents are committed to detecting and interdicting these dangerous narcotics and preventing these drugs from entering our communities."

VIII. DHS Issues Standards for First Responders Personal Protective Equipment

Homeland Security's Science and Technology division adopted on Feb. 26 its first standards regarding personal protective equipment developed to protect first responders against chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear incidents. These standards, which will assist state and local procurement officials and manufacturers, are intended to provide emergency personnel with the best available protective gear.

Homeland Security is adopting these standards, developed in partnership with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Homeland Security's standards are designed to assist state and local officials in procurement decisions related to first responder equipment. In addition, these guidelines will assist manufacturers by providing performance standards and test methods. This provides the manufacturing community with minimum performance requirements for equipment, and the test methods to confirm that the required performance levels are achieved.

IX. Coast Guard, ICE Stop Boats On Smuggling Voyages

Coast Guard aircraft and cutters teamed up with Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) aircraft the night of Feb. 24 to intercept two Dominican Republic boats carrying a total of 140 migrants on smuggling voyages to Puerto Rico. A Coast Guard HU-25 Falcon jet, based in Miami, but operating out of Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen, spotted the two yolas running close together about 56 miles northwest of Punta Borinquen, Puerto Rico, just before sunset.

Realizing they had been spotted, the operators of the vessels split up with one yola heading on an easterly course while the second yola turned south. The Coast Guard Cutter Matinicus headed to intercept the southbound yola which was 25-feet in length and carrying 48 illegal migrants. After the migrants were taken safely aboard the cutter, they reported the vessel had departed La Romana, Dominican Republic, three days prior. The eastbound yola, a 30-foot wooden boat, was intercepted by the Coast Guard Cutter Ocracoke which took aboard 92 illegal migrants who said their vessel also departed La Romana three days prior.

An HH-65 helicopter from Air Station Borinquen stood by to provide search and rescue support until the migrants were safely aboard the cutters. Two ICE aircraft provided overhead cover for the interception and recovery operations after the Falcon jet was required to depart the scene due to low fuel.

The migrants will be repatriated to the Dominican Republic. While on Coast Guard cutters, migrants receive food, water, and medical attention as needed. In the first two months of 2004, 2,085 Dominican Republic migrants have been intercepted at sea, compared to a total of 1,469 intercepted during all of 2003.

"Everything came together for the safe recovery of 140 migrants. The teamwork between the Coast Guard and ICE was great," said Lt. Luis Rodriguez of the Coast Guard Greater Antilles Section. "These migrant voyages remain extremely dangerous; the boats are small and often unseaworthy and lack proper equipment, the weather and sea conditions are very unpredictable, and the smugglers who operate the boats are often ruthless. Everything adds up to an extremely hazardous situation for migrants who attempt these illegal voyages."

X. Agreement Provides Major "Force Multiplier" To Federal Air Marshals

Michael J. Garcia, Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and W. Ralph Basham, Director of the U.S. Secret Service, on Feb. 24 announced a new agreement between their respective agencies that will bolster U.S. aviation security by providing a "force multiplier" to ICE's Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS).

Under the terms of the agreement, the Secret Service will provide the ICE FAMS with travel information for armed personnel traveling on U.S. commercial flights during their normal course of business. This initiative would enable the ICE FAMS the flexibility to deploy their Federal Air Marshals to a wider range of flights.

"Today's agreement exemplifies the enhanced law enforcement coordination that has resulted from the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE and Secret Service, two critical Homeland Security agencies, are teaming up in ways never before possible to make civil aviation more secure," said Garcia.

"Homeland security is a mission that none of us can perform individually," said Director Basham. "It requires a collective effort on the part of every federal, state and local government agency. The Secret Service has long understood the importance of building trusted relationships with other law enforcement agencies at every level. This agreement and the cooperation between our agencies is yet another example of how the Secret Service continues to make significant contributions to this country's war on terrorism and the defense of our homeland."

ICE FAMS Director Thomas D. Quinn joined Garcia and Basham in announcing the memorandum of agreement. Quinn noted that the ICE FAMS is pursuing similar agreements with other federal law enforcement agencies in an effort to provide air carriers, passengers, and crews with the maximum-security coverage possible.

XI. Director Aguirre Kicks Off USCIS Anniversary Celebration in Atlanta

More than 100 active-duty service members took the Oath of Allegiance during a special military naturalization ceremony on Friday at Fort Benning, Ga. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Director Eduardo Aguirre and Brigadier General Benjamin Freakley, Commander, U.S. Army Infantry Center, presided over the event. In a July 2002 Executive Order, President Bush streamlined the process by which military service men and women (active duty - war on terror) could become citizens. During the past year, more than 8,000 military service members have become U.S. citizens. The naturalization ceremony is the first anniversary kick-off event for USCIS.

XII. CBP Delays Implementation of Term "Shipper"

U.S. Customs and Border Protection announced on Feb. 23 the delay of the March 4, 2004, compliance date of the "shipper" data field in the section of its final Trade Act regulations governing ocean-going cargo. Compliance with all other aspects of the rule regarding inbound ocean cargo will be required starting on March 4.

This regulation was part of a regulatory package published in the *Federal Register* on Dec. 5, 2003, implementing the Trade Act of 2002, to require advance electronic transmission of cargo data.

The delay will provide CBP with an opportunity to carefully evaluate and respond to a petition from the trade community that challenged the definition of "shipper" in the Trade Act of 2002 final rule. In the final rule, the term "shipper" is defined to include the foreign vendor, supplier, manufacturer, or other similar party. The industry is requesting that this definition be repealed. Instead, CBP will use the 24-hour rule definition of shipper until the issue is resolved.

"CBP will work with the trade community to clearly define the term shipper. Until a decision is made, CBP will withhold full enforcement on the term 'shipper' as it is defined under the Trade Act final rule for vessel operations," said CBP Commissioner Robert C. Bonner.

XIII. HR Design News Corner: Proposed Changes to Performance Management, Pay, and Classification

This article is the first in a series summarizing key features of the proposed regulations for the Department's new HR system. It highlights major changes proposed in the areas of performance management, pay, and classification. Next week's article will address proposed changes in the areas of labor relations, adverse actions, and appeals.

We would like to remind employees that these are only *proposed* regulations and are subject to change when final regulations are issued, based on careful consideration of the input received during the public comment period.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The proposed system includes a revamped performance management system designed to more accurately measure employees' competencies and contributions. Traditional performance elements and standards would be optional, allowing performance expectations to better reflect assignment-specific standards. Performance would be assessed on a 3- or 4-point scale, although pass-fail may be used for employees in the entry/developmental career level.

Under the proposed system, there would be a linkage between performance appraisal ratings and increases in pay, with all employees who meet expectations receiving increases as described in the section below. Considerable investment in managerial training and oversight by a performance review board would help to ensure fairness and consistency. Additionally, there would not be "quotas" or "forced distributions" governing the assignment of performance ratings and an "Unacceptable" rating (e.g., indicating that an employee is not meeting expectations) would be appealable while other ratings will be grievable.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

What's New

- Traditional performance elements and standards now optional
- Performance expectations established by specific job assignments and priorities
- Performance Review Board provides oversight and ensures fairness

What's Not New

- Managers are required to set and communicate performance expectations
- Performance ratings are grievable
- Rating of "Unacceptable" may be appealed

PAY

The proposed system would give employees greater control over pay and earning potential through compensation that is more in-line with the private sector, annual performance increases, and clearly defined career paths. We are proposing a system that has a stronger correlation between performance and pay and greater consideration of local market conditions. The proposed regulations call for each occupational cluster to have a separate pay range associated with each career level. A pay range would represent the minimum and maximum salary for all positions in that career level, and would be determined based on labor market rates.

Unlike the current GS system, there would be no fixed steps within each pay range. We are proposing that employees be converted to the new pay range based on their current salary, plus a pro-rated increase that takes into account how close they are to their next step increase. There would be no reduction in current pay or benefits as a result of this transition.

Employees are eligible to receive various increases on an annual basis:

- All employees who meet organizational expectations (as reflected on an annual performance appraisal) would receive an annual market adjustment including locality. The amount of this adjustment would be based on several factors: labor market conditions, mission, availability of funds, the level of pay adjustments received by employees of other Federal agencies, and other factors.
- Employees who meet organizational expectations would also receive an additional increase for performance, with higher increases provided for increasingly higher levels of performance. For example, the percentage increase for those rated as “Outstanding” would be higher than the percentage increase for those rated as “Exceeds Expectations” and so forth. Thus, high performing employees progress through the pay range quicker, and good performers also receive salary increases.
- Special pay supplements (e.g., special rates) are available for unusually difficult assignments, special skills, or recruiting/retention.
- There may also be gain sharing or goal sharing programs, special act awards, and performance bonuses.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO PAY

What’s New

- Wider pay ranges (no GS grades and no steps)
- Pay ranges based on local labor market rates by occupation
- Eliminates Time-in-Grade requirements for promotion
- Amount of annual adjustment tailored to DHS mission and jobs
- Additional increase based on performance or competencies, not time-in-grade
- Ability to influence amount of increase based on performance

What’s Not New

- Locality pay still applies for retirement, premium, and overtime pay
- Special rates still offered
- Good performers continue to receive an annual adjustment
- Special act awards
- Gain sharing and goal sharing awards

CLASSIFICATION

We are proposing a departure from the traditional General Schedule (GS) classification regulations, where positions would be placed into series and grades. According to proposed

Deleted: individuals

regulations, jobs would be grouped into a limited number of broad occupational clusters (some possible examples are administrative, border protection, investigations, science and technology), resulting in a simplified, more flexible system. For each cluster there would typically be 4-career levels (e.g., entry/developmental, full performance, senior expert and supervisory) that would clearly define career paths. Promotion to another career level would require assessment and/or competition.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO CLASSIFICATION

What's New

- Simplified classification system assigning jobs to broad occupational clusters
- Clear career paths defined for each occupational cluster to support employee development and advancement

What's Not New

- Similar jobs will still be assigned to common occupational families

Tell Us What You Think

We continue to encourage a dialogue as we proceed through the regulatory process. We hope that you will take some time to review our proposed system and submit your recommendations and concerns for public record. There are two methods for submitting public comment:

- **Via the Internet**

Proposed regulations and background information on the HR Design process can be found online at www.epa.gov/edocket. This site includes a link to the proposed DHS regulations and instructions for submitting public comment electronically.

- **Via U.S. Mail**

Written submissions, referencing DHS/OPM and docket number (DHS-2004-001), can be sent to:

DHS/OPM HR System Public Comments
PO BOX 14474
Washington, D.C. 20044-4474

The deadline for submitting public comments is March 22, 2004.

You can also continue to send your questions and comments regarding the new HR system to hrdesign@dhs.gov. However, comments submitted to this address will not be considered part of the official public docket.

XIV. Pressing Releases

CBP BORDER PATROL ARRESTS FELON POSSIBLY TIED TO MEXICAN ORGANIZED CRIME

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21 -- U.S. Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol agents assigned to the Del Rio, Texas, Station observed a group of individuals entering the United States illegally by wading across the Rio Grande River. Agents intercepted the group and arrested three individuals. One of the three was identified as a U.S. citizen wanted by the U.S. Marshals on outstanding felony warrants. Law enforcement officials believe he has extensive ties to Mexican organized crime syndicates.

CBP BORDER PATROL RESCUES AN ILLEGAL ALIEN FROM THE COLORADO RIVER

WASHINGTON, Feb. 23 -- U.S. Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol agents assigned to the Yuma, Ariz., Border Patrol Search Trauma and Rescue (BORSTAR) team rescued an illegal alien in the Colorado River. During the rescue, four shots were fired at the agents; two shots were fired from Mexico and two from the United States' side of the river. Agents later arrested 36 more aliens in the area. An agent and an alien sustained minor injury.

MARK HATFIELD NAMED DIRECTOR OF TSA COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

WASHINGTON, Feb. 24 -- Mark O. Hatfield, Jr., a communications veteran in both the public and private sectors, has been named Director of the Office of Communications and Public Information at the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Hatfield has been Acting Director of the office since November 29. In the previous year he managed TSA's regional public affairs office in New York City with responsibility for media relations in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Connecticut. He also managed national news stories for TSA headquarters. "Mark brings a wealth of information and experience to his new assignment," said Rear Adm. David M. Stone, Acting TSA Administrator. "He is continuing TSA's practice of being responsive to the media and the public, providing high-quality leadership as our communications team explains ever-evolving security measures needed to protect against terrorists."

SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY TOM RIDGE TO MEET WITH CITIZEN CORPS VOLUNTEERS

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26 -- To recognize the contribution citizens make in helping to keep our hometowns secure, Secretary Tom Ridge and other high-level Department officials will meet with volunteers active in Citizen Corps when they travel across the country. "Citizens are a critical component of any endeavor to secure the homeland and I want to personally thank those who have taken that message to heart. By keeping our hometowns safer, we make our country safer," said Secretary Ridge. Through Citizen Corps, the Department of Homeland Security provides local opportunities for everyone to participate in hometown security through personal preparedness, training, and volunteer opportunities. To find out more about Citizen Corps and to find the Council nearest you, visit www.citizencorps.gov.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY ANNOUNCES SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26 -- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology division today announced the appointment of individuals to serve on the Homeland Security Science and Technology Advisory Committee (HSSTAC). "Secretary Ridge and I are delighted to welcome these advisors to our team," said Dr. Charles McQueary, Under Secretary, Science and Technology. "We look forward to working with the Committee to continue our efforts to harness the nation's scientific knowledge to protect America and our way of life from terrorists and their weapons of mass destruction." HSSTAC has been established to serve as a source of independent, scientific and technical planning advice to the Under Secretary for Science and Technology as mandated by the Homeland Security Act of 2002. The Committee will hold its first meeting February 26-27, 2004. A list of members is available on the DHS website at: <http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=3234>.

TSA NAMES FEDERAL SECURITY DIRECTORS

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26 -- The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) today named four Federal Security Directors (FSD) to positions in Detroit, Chicago, Kauai, Hawaii and Billings,

Mont. "These FSDs will be our personal representatives responsible for ensuring the safety of our skies and carrying out the TSA's mission in the war on terrorism," said Rear Adm. David M. Stone, TSA's Acting Administrator. "These experienced professionals will be on the front lines and are an integral part in furthering the TSA's commitment to world-class security and world-class customer service." The position of federal security director was created by the Aviation and Transportation Security Act signed by President Bush on November 19, 2001. The FSDs are: John S. Kinney, Billings Airport, Montana; Michael H. Zunk, Chicago O'Hare International Airport; Robert E. Ball, Detroit International Airport; John C. "Jack" Kelley, Lihue Airport, Kauai, Hawaii.

SAN DIEGO COAST GUARD CUTTER SEIZES 668 POUNDS OF COCAINE

ALAMEDA, Calif., Feb. 27 -- The 378-foot Coast Guard Cutter Chase, homeported in San Diego and a U.S. Navy vessel joined forces to seize 668 pounds of cocaine from a go-fast vessel 145 miles South West of Costa Rica, Wednesday, Feb. 11. The Chase crew turned over the contraband to federal authorities Thursday morning, Feb. 26. An East Coast-based Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) aboard the naval vessel detected the go-fast vessel Feb. 10 and assisted the Chase. The Chase deployed an armed Coast Guard Stingray helicopter, which disabled the go-fast vessel. The five people aboard the go-fast vessel dumped 13 bales of cocaine into the ocean and fled to shore where they were apprehended by Costa Rican authorities.

DHS BEGINS REPATRIATION OF HAITIAN MIGRANTS TO HAITI

WASHINGTON, Feb. 27 -- Today the U.S. Coast Guard began repatriating Haitian migrants directly back to Haiti. The safe repatriation of approximately 530 Haitian migrants from two Coast Guard cutters is expected to be completed this afternoon. The Haitian migrants were rescued from a total of 13 boats in the Windward Pass over the past several days. The repatriation is being conducted in coordination with the Haitian authorities. The migrants are being turned over to the Haitian Coast Guard. For images of the interdiction and repatriation, go to www.d7publicaffairs.com and for additional information, call the Miami DHS Media Center at 305-415-6683.

XV. Upcoming Events

March 1 -- Secretary Tom Ridge speaks to the National Association of Counties luncheon in Washington, D.C.

Under Secretary Asa Hutchinson joins Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia and Acting Administrator Dave Stone at the Department of Homeland Security First Anniversary Naturalization Oath Ceremony in Miami, Fla.

Under Secretary Michael Brown speaks to the 58th Interdepartmental Hurricane Conference in Charleston, S.C.

Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Robert Bonner holds an Employee Town Hall meeting at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, D.C.

March 2 -- President George W. Bush speaks to Department of Homeland Security employees at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, D.C.

Under Secretary Frank Libutti and Under Secretary Charles McQueary testify before the Senate Appropriations Homeland Security subcommittee on the DHS FY05 budget in Washington, D.C.

March 3 -- Under Secretary Brown testifies before the House Select Homeland Security Emergency Preparedness & Response subcommittee on the DHS FY05 budget in Washington, D.C.

March 4 -- Secretary Ridge testifies before the House Appropriations Homeland Security subcommittee on the DHS FY05 budget in Washington, D.C.

Under Secretary Hutchinson speaks to the Securities Industry Association 4th Annual Anti-Money-Laundering Conference in New York, N.Y.

Under Secretary Libutti, Assistant Secretary Liscouski, and Assistant Secretary Hughes testify before the House Select Homeland Security Intelligence & Counterterrorism subcommittee on the DHS FY05 budget in Washington, D.C.

Under Secretary Hutchinson testifies before the House Government Reform Committee on US-VISIT in Washington, D.C.

Assistant Secretary Garcia testifies before the House Judiciary Immigration, Border Security and Claims subcommittee on Operation Predator in Washington, D.C.

Commissioner Bonner participates in a “one Face at the Border” event in Seattle, Wash., and conducts an employee Town Hall event.

March 5 – Secretary Ridge meets with Governor Linda Lingle of Hawaii in Honolulu, Hawaii.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Director Eduardo Aguirre attends the Poder Business Forum event in Miami, Fla.

THREAT LEVEL: YELLOW