

Thank you Gary,

Yesterday I reported to you on some of the activities and projects the National Council has accomplished during the past year. As I told you, I believe this has been a valuable and productive year for the National Council. I believe we have established a positive and constructive relationship with Ruth Pierce and the OROS staff. We have had productive meetings with John Dyer and Michael Grochowski who is in charge of the Human Resources staff. We must work on continuing to develop these Central Office relationships during the coming year.

One of the objectives of the National Council, as stated in our Constitution and Bylaws, is: "To encourage the establishment of policies that best serve the public interest in accomplishing the mission of our agency". It is because we know that personal, face to face public service is central to our success in carrying out the mission of SSA that the National Council has become a primary defender of community based public service. The essential nature of a strong Field Office network providing community based public service must be our central theme during the next year. Downsizing, the 800 number, and other initiatives during the past several years have changed SSA but they have not negated the importance of community based public service. We must continue to speak out strongly in support of this principle.

There are other issues where Field Office input through the National Council will be important. The ^{BUDGETARY INCENTIVES} ~~Gainsharing~~ pilot is in its second year. We will continue to monitor that project and identify its positive features. Personnel issues such as the combined claims classification standard and the possibility of a GS-12 for at least some Operations Supervisors will require our analysis, ideas, and encouragement. Undoubtedly other important issues will arise during the next year. Our input is vital and we will make that input.

A number of important issues will require our attention on the legislative front this year. We will continue our efforts to improve on the PMRS system by providing input to the study being done by the National Academy of Science and by working with OPM and Members of Congress. Federal pay reform has come to the forefront as an issue over the past several months. We will be active in making recommendations and working for an improved pay system. FEHB reform remains a pressing issue and we will continue to participate in efforts to reshape that system. We will continue to inform our members on these and other important legislative issues. *AS THEY DEVELOP.*

We must continue our efforts to improve communications with our members. MASS Media and NC NEWS provide good vehicles for this communication. During the coming year I will try to make certain that NC NEWS is published more regularly to keep our members up to date on current issues.

A major effort must be made during the coming year to increase our membership. While this is primarily the task of the Regional Associations, I will do all I can to assist them in increasing their membership. We must convince those who are not members of the importance and value of joining with us in providing the unfiltered voice of Field Office management to Central and Regional Office decision makers.

I believe the National Council should face the future with confidence but also with vigilance. We will face many challenges during the coming year but I believe that, standing together, we can meet those challenges.

I have appreciated your support and encouragement during the past year and I look forward to serving as your President for the coming year.