

2005 MIDWEST AREA PASTG Annual Report

Members of the 2005 Council included:

Sherry Buxton, Co-Chair and National Council Representative

Melissa Stiefel, Co-Chair

Jaci Weese, Recorder/Information Coordinator

Ginger Walker

Brittney Mernick

Karen Burianek

Stephanie Brennan, Web Master

Heather Lewandowski, Ex-Officio, National Council Representative

Accomplishments

- The PASTG has taken a leadership role in creating and maintaining an on-line Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) manual, a compendium of approved Agency procedures with examples, to assist the Midwest Area secretarial and administrative support staff. The manual is an excellent training tool for recently hired and seasoned support staff, as well as an invaluable resource for new, revised, and current procedures. Other ARS areas regularly use the MWA SOP as a reference tool and have also used it to assist them in developing their own manuals.
- The MWA Mentoring Program: The PASTG composed a guide for mentors and appointed experienced mentors for new secretaries in the Area. All new MWA secretaries are assigned a mentor for a minimum of one year although the relationships usually continue beyond that time creating lasting support networks among MWA secretaries. All new support staff are brought into Peoria for training which is organized and led by the PASTG. This training was conducted in August of 2005. Key Area personnel also meet with the group to provide additional specialized training. Three mentees were trained this year.
- Temporary Assistance Program: The PASTG temporary support program was organized to provide support to units with secretarial vacancies. This program ensures that management unit offices operate smoothly when a permanent support position is vacated. The PASTG recruits volunteers from the secretarial team in the Area to serve in administrative assistance roles in the interim. This service has been recognized within the Area as essential to maintaining administrative workflow and research progress. This program was not utilized in 2005.
- We continue to disseminate quarterly newsletters to all the secretaries in MWA.
- 2004 marked the ninth year of the MWA Secretary of the Year program. Melissa Stiefel of the Sugarbeet and Bean Research Unit, East Lansing, Michigan was selected as the 2004 MWA Secretary of the Year and was recognized at the MWA Leadership Conference held in November 2005 in St. Louis, Missouri.

- The training scholarship program is continuing to be utilized to a great extent within the Midwest Area. This program provides funding for training from the Area Office allowing employees to benefit from training that may not be possible due to financial constraints within their units. The scholarship application and information is available on the PASTG homepage.
- Provided insight as to the revision of the ARMP manual for the Agency. Prepared a rough draft of the manual for editing by Headquarters.

Goals

- Continue to update the Midwest Area PASTG Home Page and SOP Manual.
- Continue quarterly newsletter.
- Continue Training Scholarship Program.
- Continue Temporary Assistance Program.
- Continue to offer training to new MWA office support personnel.
- Address initiatives as directed by the MWA Senior Management Team.

Secretary of the Year

Melissa (Missy) Stiefel –
Midwest Area Secretary of the Year