

ASMC Luncheon 18 November 2008

In the absence of Dan Genest, Ken Pickler opened the meeting (1155). He introduced the new AAC/FM, Lt Col Randy White. Then he recognized Carol Walton, a retiree who was present at our meeting and is recovering from a recent bout of chemotherapy.

Then Ken turned the floor over to Lisa Gamon, who introduced our guest speaker, Ms Lee McGehee, the AAC/DP. Her topic was Teleworking.

Telecommuting, virtual work, and mobile work are various other names, but OPM refers to it as "Teleworking."

OPM, the Office of Personnel Management, sets personnel policy for the federal government.

- OPM defines Teleworking as a work arrangement where an employee performs duties at home or another work site geographically close to home.
- There are many public laws and directives issued by OPM that address telework, however most direct the increase participation rate of telework for the workforce. The initial OPM goal was to have a 25% participation rate. This did not happen. No official reason why not, but examples of successful teleworking have been for employees who are recuperating at home after an illness, injury, or pregnancy. Most teleworking has been observed on a part-time basis.
- Confusion comes from who is eligible to participate.
 - Bargaining unit eligibility comes into play.
 - There has to be a cultural shift – people are not available to do short-notice work, attend meetings.
 - Frequently a supervisor or manager may let the first person who asks participate.
 - Strategic planning gets neglected.
 - Supervisor does not have the ability to actually see the employee at work.

Telework should be viewed as a recruiting and retention tool.

- Younger people in our workforce will begin to expect telework as an option.
- Telework might be less stressful – more convenient to stay home, or not be in a noisy office, so more productive.
- Better for the environment – fewer people driving to work. Saves on gas costs, too!
- Less office space would be required, with resulting lower rents on federal office buildings.
- Disabled people (including veterans) would find it easier to work from home.

How to be an effective teleworker:

- Assess your job – what you do
- Do you have portable tasks? Stuff like data entry might be done at home.
- Can you work independently?
- Are you comfortable with technology?
- Do you have good communication skills, especially at writing?
- Do you have office space at home?
- Would you plan to cancel child/dependent care? If so, telework is not for you.

FM can help determine teleworking costs to implement, and budget for it. FM, DP, and the IT community would have to partner to determine potential use, costs, and technology requirements.

Specifically, the government must provide the equipment (PC, printer, fax), but the gray area is in the costs of internet connection. The government will not pay for telephone service to your house nor any structural changes to your home to accommodate a home office! And of course, use of the SIPRNET is out!

Reference: www.telework.gov – many training courses are available.

The Department of Justice and the Department of Transportation (DOJ, DOT) have neared the 25% goal with people working at remote offices.

Ken Pickler presented Ms McGehee with a certificate for the donation of \$50 to Fischer House in her name. He reminded everyone to sign in to get CPE credit.

Door prize winners (gift certificates) were Serena Nieten and Jennifer McKenzie.

Next ASMC luncheon will be the Christmas potluck on Dec 17 at “Luke’s Place” near the Eglin FCU. Adjourned at 1225.

Laura Gamble