

Incident Business Practices Working Team
Meeting Notes
February 26 – 28, 2008

Present: Kathy Shelton (Chair), Lyle Carlile (NWCG Rep), Mary Ann Szymoniak (FS), Betty Daniel (Eastern States), Steve Hasenohrl (Western States), Jim Fletcher (Dispatch), Randy Hart (Ops), Hallie Locklear (BLM), Debra Ledford (NPS), Sarah Fisher (FWS), David Lucas (guest), Nancy Hunt (BIA), Tracey Nimlos (notetaker).

Notetaking: It was decided that decisions need to be documented and the discussions and reasoning behind decisions need to be documented. It was suggested we need an action item tracker that moves with us to each meeting. The group will review the notes at the end of each day. Action items are highlighted in yellow.

Requests for Exception Positions: There was an unofficial request to raise a pay rate for a shortage position. The request was denied because it violates our current process in the AD Pay plan. We will continue with the same process which is outlined in the AD Pay Plan to request classification of new positions and reclassification of existing positions.

We have a document outlining the history of the AD pay plan. Mary Ann will build a one-page document outlining how to request reclassification of a position or propose any changes to the Pay Plan. Hallie will send the draft history to everyone on the Team who will have 2 weeks to make comment before it is finalized and posted to the web. Kathy will have both of the documents posted to the IBPWT web page. The goal is to have these documents posted to the web by April 1.

Hiring Casuals for FEMA Assignments: During Katrina the DOI casual payment center was receiving timesheets for FFT2 and they felt this was not an appropriate position for hurricane assignments. The DOI casual payment center questioned why we did not hire these people as THSPs. Part of this starts at the ESF4 level and whether or not we are accepting appropriate assignments. If we only accept appropriate assignments we should not need to reclassify how we hire our firefighters. Also, ESF4 desk is not just being staffed by the Forest Service anymore; there are interagency players who can help make those decisions on assignment acceptance. We feel that we are hiring people appropriately.

AD Travel: The issues are incidentals, occasional hotels. There is inconsistent application of processing travel, ADs have to use a personal credit card and it takes a long time to get reimbursed. On the agency side, employees are spending an inordinate amount of time processing AD travel. According to the payment center the minimal travel reimbursements (such as daily incidentals and occasional hotel rooms) can be claimed on the OF-288. The AD would need a receipt for the hotel room if they want to be reimbursed on the OF-288. We need an interagency standard operating procedure for travel reimbursement. We can rewrite travel reimbursement process in the AD Pay Plan for 2009 and outline the new procedures. For 2008, the Pay Plan says we will follow the Federal Travel Regulations. The NE Area has agreed to pilot a process for travel

reimbursement on the OF-288 for their AD employees. DOI ADs take their OF-288 home with them and the travel can be added on to the 288 at the home unit. We might be able to add this in to the I-Suite program. The OF-288 can be coded for reimbursement so that money will not be taxed.

The Team agrees we want to explore reimbursing ADs for travel on their OF-288. We need a team to work on this with a DOI person, an FS person, a travel person, and a payment center person. Mary Ann will take the lead for the FS and DOI will find out which of their agencies are hiring ADs in the Northeast Area. The IBPWT will write a letter to these units asking them to pilot processing travel for ADs on the OF-288. Each federal team member will check with their agency travel person regarding whether we need travel authorizations and what backup they will need to pay travel off the OF-288. Even if they need travel authorizations, we will still move ahead.

Course and Task Book Review: Randy is reviewing the new facilities unit leader task book, Sarah is reviewing the Helicopter Manager task book and Kathy will review Resource Unit Leader. Betty will have the next review.

NWCG Reorganization: Lyle gave an update on the consolidation and the new organization.

IBPWT Budget: we got \$35,000 for printing the handbook. There is no money for forms rewrite; we have \$8000 for state travel and \$2000 for task group support. NWCG is funding according to their strategic plan and how budget requests fit into this plan. The process for funding according to the strategic plan will be developed and we will submit budget requests for 2009 and 2010 based on instruction from NWCG.

October Strategic Meeting: a targeted group of individuals would have a review to determine if there are issues, identify training items, and facilitate a communication process to the field.

The post season fire review would allow the participants to help us figure out solutions. One of the objectives of this review group would design a delivery method for new programs and information. The outcome of the review would determine the next steps. The invitations would be based on the level of activity experienced by the IMTs, IBAs, etc. Planning team for the post season fire review is Nancy, Sarah, Debra, Hallie and Randy. Attendance needs to be spread across agencies. Planning team will determine needs for the location and the meeting planner will determine location. October 20-24, 2008 is the date for the review. The group will report progress on the next conference call.

Handbook Status: the printer has it and has asked for an extension to March 13 to have it finished. The full size should be posted to the web page asap. The printed version will come out in the small size or it can be printed from the web in the large size. The page numbering in both versions will match. We will have a letter for NWCG to accompany

the handbook release. Sarah is almost done with the change summary sheets and will prepare the draft letter.

All Hazard Authorities Task Group: this project was originally created to research and find the authorities for all hazard assignments. David Lucas was asked to take over the project as the task group leader. The group consisted of representatives of FS and DOI agencies. The main objective was to determine if and when we should respond, what is appropriate authority by agency and if the authority applies to other lands, and funding. The group also networked with many state representatives.

The group came up with a memo which discusses types of incidents and has an authority matrix and a decision tree to help decide if an agency has authority for an all hazard assignment.

The group's work has been sent on to Hallie and Mary Ann for fine-tuning and legal review.

Business Process Reengineering:

The FS is working on a contract for incident support. Individual resources will not be done, but contracts will be done for modules, i.e. a Time Unit, and they will bid based on camp size.

FESSA has put together a proposal for expanded use of commercial invoices with EERAs.

Electronic Processing of AD employees is ongoing at this point with the IT people making an estimate of the cost of development. Mary Ann will follow up with Jon Skeels on this project. Hallie will check with NBC to find out what it would cost for AD employees to be added to Employee Express and find out what our options are. Lyle suggests we continue to do our research and be ready when the parent group decides to prioritize projects.

Another proposal being evaluated is daily rates for ADs. This could save timekeeping efforts and would streamline the entire process all the way thru auditing and to the payment centers. To move this forward we need a white paper to analyze the costs and benefits and take it to our HR people. Sarah, Hallie and Mary Ann will take on writing the white paper for NWCG.

Single Payment Center for each Type of Payment—ASC participated in the development of the white paper. A system needs to be developed to allow for user pay. More numerical analysis is needed in our white paper before it's taken forward for the next steps. The group wants to continue to move this forward to NWCG. Hallie and Mary Ann will continue the project and bring a proposed final document back to the group for approval on a conference call.

Advanced Cost Training Task Group: the group was tasked to develop advanced cost training to supplement S-360. Hallie handed out a progress report outlining work that has been done on each objective. The group would like to do an alpha course the week of May 5 in Boise. The group would like to see I-Suite training be a pre-requisite for this course. A couple of members of the IBPWT would attend the alpha training. The students for the alpha training need to be by invitation to ensure a good evaluation of the course. Hallie will prepare a memo from the IBPWT to the task group outlining the expectations for the alpha training.

Incident Based Automation: This project started in 1999 when groups were using different platforms for incident automation. This group recommended the adoption of I-Suite. Incident Based Automation occurred in 3 phases: 1) stabilization of I-Suite, 2) futuring of incident automation, and 3) I-Suite as an enterprise application. We are in the process of advertising a national contract for technology needs for incidents. We reviewed and accepted the deliverables from the IBM Incident Based Automation. The Incident Based Automation web page is located at <http://iba.nwccg.gov>. IBM also presented Incident Based Automation data modeling opportunities.

The models will be delivered to National Wildland Fire Enterprise Architecture (NWFEA) Group on April 3. The next step is to do an analysis of the opportunities identified by IBM to determine what should be included in the reengineering of I-Suite and then determine if the remaining opportunities make sense and should be evaluated for future projects. The IBPWT, IRMWT and some of the other NWCCG working teams would be key to setting priorities for the development of these processes. Randy and Sarah will represent the IBPWT at the priority setting meetings.

The NWCCG parent group needs to review this proposal. The IBPWT feels we need to continue with the e-I-Suite improvements. The current I-Suite team can meet regarding this proposal to prioritize the items that are easily included in I-Suite.

I-Suite Changes for next Year: the 2008 updates for I-Suite will be available on the I-Suite website.

Mary Ann represents the business community for Incident Based Automation and would like someone to step forward to begin taking over this lead before she retires.

VIPR Update: VIPR resulted from an OIG audit of EERAs. The OIG audit report made several recommendations to the FS regarding EERAs. To meet audit objectives and decrease costs, incident procurement will be FAR based, best value driven, and consistent nationally. National templates have been built that include standard equipment specifications, best value award and priority of dispatch. Each host dispatch center will have a priority list for dispatch as outlined in the agreement. There will be standardized performance evaluations. The VIPR system will replace EaTIS. VIPR will accept pre-season contracts, aviation contracts and national contracts. The first release of VIPR will be in Nov. 2008.

Round Robin:

FWS (Sarah)—move toward making NPS payment teams interagency and 11 people from FWS applied to participate on the payment teams. DOI is tasking a group to look at fire procurement issues and will include FS representation.

NPS (Debra)—Linda Swain retired end of January which is a large loss in their Budget Group. NPS may combine the national budget analyst position and Boise AO position. NPS is working on streamlining the payment process. NPS is now down to only 3 payment teams and the rotation is in the national mob guide. In addition there will be a list of cadre members from the DOI agencies that will be available to go out with the payment teams. There are issues with accessing the NPS payment system by the interagency members. Florida has agreed to host the test class for the new S-360 class.

BLM (Hallie)—Jeff Scott, budget analyst for the BLM moved to NPS. BLM will be going to the Finance Business Management System, the new DOI finance system, in 2008. BLM will be centralizing business functions. BLM Acquisition staff is meeting in Washington regarding VIPR this week. BLM is holding their national business meeting March 12-13 in Boise.

Operations (Randy)—Fire Use will be merged into appropriate management response and there will be only 2 types of fire: wildland fire and prescribed fire. Utah BLM and the national office are collaborating on a coordinator position to help with education on the trespass recovery process.

Coordinator's group (Jim)—the national coordinators' meeting is in 2 weeks in Santa Fe. The dispatch feasibility study was completed the end of Dec. NICC will only be placing orders for resources statused as available.

Western States (Steve)—redesign of State & Private Forestry consolidated grants was directed by Congress to be more competitive. For FY08 they directed that 15% of the federal grant funds be pooled for the states. The states have to submit proposals to compete for that money. Some states have relied on that funding to support their base programs. The original intent was to step up the percentage of money that would be competitive, however, that has been backed off. The other issue is a cross boundary pilot project sponsored by the US Forest Service. The FS will give states or local gov't funding to provide fire protection on National Forest land. The state of South Dakota submitted a proposal to protect the portion of the Nebraska National Forest that is in South Dakota. South Dakota is moving ahead with the IQS qualification system.

Eastern States (Betty)—Florida is predicting a severe fire season for this year. Betty is part of the Critical Incident Management Course cadre that puts states agencies through training and qualifies them to be state Type 1 teams.

Forest Service (Mary Ann)—we are predicting having fewer buying teams available this year. There is an MOU signed with Treasury to begin piloting using debit cards for crew bosses. The first pilot will be on the Ouachita NF. It can be used just as any other debit card. A manager can load the debit card with funds directly from Treasury. The manager can track how the funds are spent. The North Carolina state IMT hopefully will be the next pilot (probably mid-summer) for the debit card program. This would eliminate the need to dispatch a federal procurement person with the team.

Another pilot project the FS has started is for GSA rental cars. A group is working with GSA to choose a program for rental cars for incidents. They are working with us on payment methods, what kind of reports we want and what kind of vehicles we need. The vehicles will come with a GSA fuel card and can be delivered. It will hopefully be piloted on the next fire in the Southern Area and in the Great Basin.

NWCG (Lyle)—the strategic planning exercise and reorganization continues and should be beneficial in the end.

BIA (Nancy)—Nancy is working to get I-Suite training done and loading I-Suite onto BIA computers. Nancy volunteers to do the tracking tool for the IBPWT. She will assist with the agenda for the next meeting as well.

David Lucas—thanks for inviting him.

Kathy—IBA training is with Deb Epps group at Boise.

Conference Call Schedule: The new schedule will be at noon mountain time on the 3rd Wed. of each month.