SSS Director Visits Naval Academy  Pg. 2

SSS Personnel Tour the White House  Pg. 3

DMC Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month  Pg. 10

SSS MOUs with Arkansas and Oklahoma  Pg. 16

2024 FEHB Open Enrollment Begins
This month, Acting Director Spangenberg and Chief of Staff Khan met with Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro at the U.S. Naval Academy and to watch the Dress Parade of the Brigade of Midshipmen, a visual presentation of military discipline, professionalism and teamwork. Acting Director Spangenberg is also a veteran of the U.S. Navy and graduated with distinction from the U.S. Naval Academy where he was a four-year member of the men's heavyweight rowing team.
SSS Personnel Tour the White House

Recently, Blaine Caracter (Support Services), Sakyarh Chatman (Support Services), Joshua Vance (Operations) and Mario Frazier (Information Technology) had the opportunity to go on a tour of the White House. To learn more about the “People's House” and its rich history please go to House Building: https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/the-grounds/the-white-house/ For information about scheduling a White House tour, visit: https://www.whitehouse.gov/visit/.

SSS Attends NGAUS Conference

SSS Chief of Staff Khan, Region III Director Steven Kett, Selective Service System Nevada State Director Craig Wrobleski, and Reserve Service Member Major Matthew Grajeda, USAFR attended this summer’s Army National Guard Conference in Reno, Nevada. The outreach efforts of the SSS team were very successful. Mr. Khan and staff had an opportunity to meet with the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, U.S. Army General Daniel R. Hokanson, as well as the Governor of Guam, the Honorable Lou Leon Guerrero. Additionally, the staff reached out to over 500 individuals throughout the event. These included Army and Air National Guardsmen, TAGs, and members of government, civilian attendees and exhibitors. Topics discussed included registration benefits, the board member program, Army National Guard Support, and State Director recruitment.

New APP for Local Board Members!

The Agency's NEW Local Board Member App is now available for download on both the Google Play and Apple App Store.

The app makes it easier for Selective Service Board Members to find contact information for their region quickly, complete annual training, and easily access FAQs and documents.

Download the app today!  
CALL CENTER WELCOMES NEWEST TEAM MEMBER!

Christopher Biggs joins our Call Center team as a Contact Representative at the Data Management Center (DMC) of the Selective Service System.

Following high school, Chris enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, where he served as an electronics equipment technician for five years, stationed in Cherry Point, North Carolina. His military service not only provided valuable technical skills, but also instilled in him a deep appreciation for challenges.

Upon transitioning to civilian life, Chris entered the warehouse industry, amassing over 10 years of experience and expertise. He pursued higher education and earned a bachelor’s degree in social and criminal justice, demonstrating his dedication to personal development. Chris is currently pursuing a degree in computer science, a field that has captivated his interest.

Outside of work, he enjoys quality time with his son, embarking on adventures, and exposing him to new experiences. In addition to his personal pursuits, Chris maintains a commitment to physical well-being through regular workouts and long bike rides.

Professionally, Chris aims to ascend within our organization, and is eager to embrace challenges and opportunities that come his way. His ability to acquire new knowledge and skills greatly contributes to our collective growth and success of our Call Center team.

HELLO
my name is

Christopher Biggs

State Directors Attend Amish Mennonite Conference in Ohio

State Director of Pennsylvania, John Williams and State Director of Ohio, Brad Willette attended the Amish Mennonite Conference in Berlin, Ohio discussing the Alternative Service Program for Conscientious Objectors. They spoke to the group about the SSS mission and vision. There were 18 states represented and nearly 100 people were in attendance.

Massachusetts Drivers License Bill and Hearings Support at State House

Massachusetts State director Tom Cronin with Jacob Daniels and Rep. Josh Cutler

Massachusetts Drivers License Bill Hearing.
The 2024 FEHB Open Season starts Monday and will run through December 11, 2023. During the annual FEHB Open Season, anyone eligible to participate in the FEHB Program may enroll, change health plans or options, cancel your FEHB enrollment, and change participation in premium conversion (waive or begin participation).

The 2024 rates chart is offered on the OPM website and provides the dollar premium change for each FEHB plan choice and enrollment type.

For 2024, the FEHB Program has 68 participating carriers offering a total of 158 plan choices (in 2023, there were 271). The reduction in health plan choices is attributed mainly to the exit of one carrier, Humana, from the FEHB Program which offered multiple plans with a total enrollment of less than 10,000 subscribers (see chart on next page).

For the 2024 Plan Year, OPM is pleased to deliver enhanced benefit offerings in the following areas across the FEHB Program: Fertility Benefits, FEHB and Medicare Coordination, Pharmacy Benefit Design, Gender Affirming Care and Services, Maternal Health, Prevention and Treatment of Obesity, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders, Telehealth, and Antibiotic Stewardship. Enhancements and highlights of several of these benefits are detailed on the chart on page eight.

- 17 nation-wide FFS plan options open to all (including HDHPs and CDHPs; in 2023, there were 18)
- 5 FFS plan options with availability limited to certain groups (Compass Rose, Foreign Service Benefit Plan, Rural Carriers Benefit Plan, and Panama Canal Area Benefit Plan) (In 2023, there were 4)
- 136 Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) plan options (including HDHPs and CDHPs; in 2023, there were 215)
- In total, 16 High Deductible Health Plans and 8 Consumer Driven Health Plans are offered in 2024, 4 of which are nationwide.

In total, FEDVIP provides dental and vision benefits to a total of over 7.5 million Federal employees, uniformed service members, annuitants, and their family members. It provides comprehensive dental and vision insurance at competitive group rates with leading dental and vision Carriers. FEDVIP enrollees give the program high marks for quality and value.

### 2024 FEDVIP Dental Carriers

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<tr>
<th>Nationwide/International</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aetna Dental</td>
<td>Dominion National</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blue Cross Blue Shield Dental</td>
<td>Emblem Health Dental</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delta Dental's Federal Employees Dental Program</td>
<td>Health Partners Dental Plan</td>
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<td>GEHA Connection Dental Plan</td>
<td>Humana</td>
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<tr>
<td>The MetLife Federal Dental Plan</td>
<td>Tripple-S Salud</td>
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<td>United Concordia Dental</td>
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<td>UnitedHealthcare Dental Plan</td>
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### 2024 FEDVIP Vision Carriers

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<th>Nationwide/International</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aetna Vision Preferred</td>
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<td>Blue Cross Blue Shield Vision</td>
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<tr>
<td>The MetLife Federal Vision Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>UnitedHealthcare Vision Plan</td>
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<td>VSP Vision Care</td>
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SSS Acting Director Spangenberg recently engaged with the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), shedding light on the agency’s strategic vision, preparedness for future challenges, and its crucial role in national security.

The discussion encompassed a range of topics, emphasizing the agency’s mission to meet readiness, modernize capabilities, and ensure preparedness to mobilize during a national emergency.

During the interview, the Director discussed the agency’s commitment to supporting the Department of Defense in recruiting efforts and highlighted the integral connection between national service and national security interests. The interview delved into the significance of the agency’s collaboration with CNAS, notably supporting a joint study with the Smith Richardson Foundation on the all-volunteer force and U.S. mobilization capabilities.

Acting Director Spangenberg’s interview shed light on the agency’s strategic initiatives, leveraging partnerships with federal agencies and embracing shared services with the Department of the Interior and the Department of Justice in critical areas such as HR and IT.

Addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent impact of the FASFA Simplification Act of 2021, the Acting Director emphasized the agency’s proactive approach to updating its digital media strategies to creatively reach young men nationwide through online platforms by utilizing metrics and data, ensuring impactful results.

The discussion with the Acting Director and CNAS served as an insightful dialogue, illuminating the agency’s steadfast dedication to national security and its proactive measures in adapting to evolving challenges.

As the Selective Service continues to forge strategic partnerships, embrace operational transformation, and elevate its outreach efforts, the agency’s engagement with organizations such as CNAS exemplifies its collaborative approach and unwavering commitment to maintaining readiness, while also modernizing for the future.

DMC Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

Why do we celebrate or have a month to honor Hispanic Heritage Month? It is an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the unique voices and experiences of Hispanic/Latino Americans and recognize their history, journeys, and achievements. Through these celebrations, we can all help to inspire younger generations and bring the workplace together.

The Data Management Center held a luncheon on September 26, 2023, to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. The theme this year was Todos Somos, Somos Uno, We Are All, All Are One. Traditionally, food represents a strong symbolic component in Latino communities. It brings connections to their roots, cultural heritage, and identity. Food brings families together in unison, as enjoying a meal with family is valued in the Latino culture.

The DMC staff was fortunate to experience the wonderful culinary delights of homemade dishes represented from various Hispanic/Latino countries that included; chicken flautas, carnitas (pork & chicken), tortillas tamales, empanadas, Spanish rice, potato salad, nacho bar and pan dulce (sweet bread).
On August 24, 2023, twenty-five Data Management Center employees received Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and Automated external defibrillator (AED) training at the Naval Safety Office at Great Lakes, Illinois. The training was conducted by Joseph Friedman, from Plan Prepare Do. The class offered classroom instruction, followed by hands-on instruction, practice and certification of CPR training. Additionally, the instructor showed the students how to operate the automated external defibrillator (AED) that is in the DMC’s Call Center. The instructor had the students highly engaged and provided them with practical, life-saving skills for the workplace and for their personal lives.

Following the course, during the DMC’s All Hands for all staff; – Benjamin Swanson, retired Navy Corpsman, provided training on first aid basics, controlling bleeding, and how to apply a tourniquet.

Employees enjoyed the hands-on training, as this was the first opportunity in several years to have a training event.
PIA's New Out-of-Home Advertising Campaign

PIA launched an extensive out-of-home advertising campaign on November 6, 2023, and is scheduled to run until January 28, 2024. This campaign spans throughout San Francisco, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Boston, and Seattle, with the goal of enhancing registration awareness and promoting greater registration compliance.

The strategic placement of these out-of-home ads near bus and metro transit lines, as well as transit hubs, seeks to reach influencers and the targeted demographic (males 18-25). These advertisements will be prominently displayed inside metro buses, at bus stops, on billboards, in bodegas, and both inside and outside of metro rail cars.

By leveraging multiple advertising touchpoints, the team aims to effectively raise registration awareness and encourage improved compliance with the registration process across these impactful urban areas.

NOVEMBER AD CAMPAIGN
The Selective Service System's Digital Affairs team has revamped its advertising strategy based on best practices to amplify the volume of website clicks to the register page. By creating one ad each month, the team will prolong the ad’s duration, allowing the digital media algorithm to better target and engage the desired demographic. This marks a shift from the previous approach, where ads were only running for two-week intervals. The team also created a separate Snapchat campaign using Snap’s best practices, emphasizing concise ad durations of 3 to 5 seconds, incorporating style ads, and leveraging user-generated content to simulate influencer-created and shared advertisements, depicting young men registering online and striking a chord with the target audience.

The campaign commenced in November and will continue through the end of the month. The Snapchat campaign alone has resulted in over 81,000 clicks to the registration page since 1 November, reaffirming the campaign’s effectiveness in driving meaningful user engagement. Click here to watch our ad on YouTube!

MARINE CORPS MARATHON GEOFENCING CAMPAIGN
The PIA team deployed a targeted digital advertising strategy utilizing Geo-fencing during the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, DC, on October 29, 2023. This innovative approach allowed bystanders and runners to encounter Selective Service advertisements on their mobile devices before and after the race. The Geo-fencing campaign yielded impressive results, amassing over 1.5 million views and capturing the attention of more than 6,500 users who actively engaged with the SSS ad by clicking through to the sss.gov register page. This tactical use of digital advertising successfully capitalized on the event’s audience, showcasing the potential of strategic Geo-fencing in reaching and resonating with a large and relevant demographic.
Selective Service System’s Alternative Service Program (ASP) has established a robust Alternative Service Employment Network across America. The Agency has been working with state governments, Federal agencies, community-based organizations, and religious groups to form partnerships and create Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) in the event of a national crisis or draft regarding Conscientious Objectors assigned as Alternative Service Workers (ASW). A MOU provides participating entities with the ability, in coordination with SSS, to determine the placement of the workers.

Many thanks to Rodrecus Donnings, ASP Manager, Region II Operations Manager Richard Ogniewski, and Arkansas State Director Richard Gassaway and Region III Director Steven Kett, Oklahoma State Director Gary Higley, and Reserve Service Member LTC Canada Cortesio for their successful efforts to establish MOUs with the states of Arkansas (Region II) and Oklahoma (Region III).

Congratulations to Gary Martz on receiving the SSS Exceptional Service Award for his outstanding contributions to Region II and the Agency from February 2019 through June 2023. Gary’s exemplary leadership abilities as the Administrative Officer and his significant role in the RSM program showcased his dedication and expertise.

With over 33 years of administration experience and service as a Sergeant Major in the G-1, Gary brought a wealth of knowledge and valuable professional relationships to the Region and NHQs. His skills and expertise eventually led him to a position with the CDC in Atlanta, where he serves as a Staff Specialist with duties in the Personnel Consulting and Advisory Team, Commissioned Corps Liaison Office, and Office of the Chief Operation Office.

Region II acknowledges Gary Martz’s exceptional service and wishes him the best of luck in all his future endeavors. His contributions have undoubtedly made a lasting impact, and his legacy will be remembered with great respect and admiration.

Additionally, Region II staff members, along with former staff members Mr. Gary Martz and Mr. Michael Edwards (not pictured), gathered at Truist Park to enjoy a wonderful summer-ending Braves baseball game. The weather was perfect, the crowd was enthusiastic, and the ambiance was outstanding; however, unfortunately, there was no win for the home team on this day. Better luck next time for the hometown Atlanta Braves.

SSS MOUs with Arkansas and Oklahoma

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It only takes one email from Blaine Caracter to know he does a lot for Selective Service. His email signature includes the titles, Program Management Analyst, EEO Director, and DEIA Officer. He also refers to himself as a Support Services Specialist.

The team he is part of takes care of most of the logistics or operating the SSS; PIV cards, physical security at NHQ, monitoring security across the agency, shipping and receiving mail, Emergency Management, inventory, and the list goes on.

He also believes there are two things every adult should do outside of taking care of their family and working.

“You should have a hobby, and you should volunteer,” Caracter said.

Volunteering is a passion for Caracter, and specifically for him, it is volunteering with the Boy Scouts.

Like his job at Selective Service, he holds several titles within the scouts: Scoutmaster of Troop 1780, Assistant Scoutmaster of Troop 1781, and Order of the Arrow Advisor for the Western Shore District.

In late August he led scouts on a two-night, three-day, high-adventure trip, canoeing on the Patuxent River.

“Half of these scouts, when they saw that water, oh they were scared,” Caracter said. “But they went out there, they did it and they accomplished it, and I told them, ‘you guys were very brave and I’m very proud of you.’”

Although this kind of outing is normally completed by kids aged 14 and up, Caracter said his group of 11–13-year-olds stood up to the challenge.

“To watch these younger kids go out there and accomplish a physically demanding task and then ask for more was very rewarding,” Caracter said. “And to watch a lot of my young leaders take charge was also very rewarding.”

Caracter, who was a boy scout himself, achieving the prestigious Eagle Scout Award, said scouting gave so much to him and he wants to give back.

“It kept me off the streets and kept me out of trouble,” Caracter said. “My mom signed me up when I was younger after my dad passed away. It was something to do.”

Looking back after completing the scouting program Caracter realized that it had helped him more than he realized.

“Before I joined scouting, I had lost my male role model,” he said. “But when I went into scouting, I picked up four of them.”

Caracter has spent the last two decades paying it forward by being that role model in the lives of the children who he leads in the Boy Scouts. He still has people come to him years later thanking him for the impact he made in their lives.

“One person can’t change the world,” Caracter said. “But one person can make small changes and that’s what I’m trying to do.”

Scouts and leaders canoe down the Patuxent River.

Blaine Caracter takes a photo with his troop in the background preparing canoes for a trip on the Patuxent River.

Blaine Caracter takes a photo with his troop in the background during a high adventure outing.
I saw SSS as an opportunity to do something different and to work with extraordinary people.

How long have you worked for the federal government and in what capacity? How long have you worked for SSS?

I have over 33 years of Federal Service. My career began in the USN, 1989 – 2006 and then once discharged worked with the Department of Defense as a DOD Police Officer from 2007-2008. In 2009, I transferred to the VA in North Chicago as a VA Federal Police officer from 2009-2013 I transferred to Temple, Texas and the Milwaukee VA, to gain upward mobility. My last Federal Service transfer before coming to work with SSS was with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives in Milwaukee, WI from 2013 – 2020 as an Investigative Analyst. In 2020, until now I have been employed by SSS as a Program Analyst for Region 1 for the last 3 years.

What do you see as the difference between Selective Service and other places where you have worked?

Selective Service is a very small agency compared to the other places I have worked. I feel that I am part of a family that is working on one mission or one goal.

How do you feel about the work that you do as a federal employee?

I love the work that I currently perform, it’s different obviously from Law Enforcement, so it allows me to grow and take new challenges as they occur.

What is it that makes federal service special?

It’s a diverse workplace that not only allows you to grow, but to learn from one another.

What would you describe as a diverse career path?

A Diverse community where senior leadership fosters a positive work culture, where employees are treated with dignity and respect and our work ethics contribute to the agency’s mission.

What is the proudest moment working in the federal government and/or for the Selective Service?

I believe working for the federal government in all my capacities has been a proud moment. The proudest moments are being recognized for my efforts towards those missions.
Congressman to SSS Employees of the Quarter, Erin Courtney (PIA) and Runner-Up Employee of the Quarter, Karan Farley (RI) and to all the employees who received awards during FY23 Q4 for their superior performance and contributions to Selective Service. The award recipients are shown below.

### Individual Awards
- **Steven Kett**
- **Flora Terrazas**
- **Steven Wisher**
- **Matthew Adams**
- **Anne Basa**
- **Jacob Daniels**
- **Thomas Devine**
- **Jeramie D’Orta**
- **Nicole Harris**
- **Scott Jones**
- **TJ Kenney**
- **Robert Kenny**
- **Steve Kett**
- **Saif Khan**
- **Dan Lauretano**
- **Lee Levels**
- **Micheal Migliara**
- **Tameeka Mitchem**
- **Francisco Morales**
- **Carlos Perez**
- **Elizabeth Peschock**
- **Alex Rudd**
- **Lisa Scheele**
- **Steven Valdez**
- **Betty Lou Wingo**
- **Iris Yu**
- **Rich Ogniewski**
- **Georges Yudidian**
- **Ali Tilave**
- **Jennifer McClanahan**

### Recognition Award: Rober Lee (IT)

- **Group Awards**
- **HR Team**
  - Barry Carter
  - Felicia Hall
  - Donna Woods
- **ECM ATO Group**
  - David Johnson
  - Amante Cruz
- **Logistics Team**
  - Sakyarh Chatman
  - Blaine Caracter
- **Systems Team**
  - Perry Chaplin
  - Alex Yuen

### Quarter Four Employee Awards

The National Forty & Eight Veterans Organization is pleased to announce that Frank Campo was installed Chef de Chemin de Fer or National Commander by action taken at 104th National Promenade held in Sandusky, Ohio September 13 - 16, 2023. The following Sous Chef de Chemin de Fer’s or National Vice-Commanders were also installed by unanimous vote, John Edelblute from Cudahy, WI, Ron Garland from Jacksonville, FL, Kevin Johnson from Saint Robert, MO. John Rogers from Georgetown, TX.

Chef de Chemin de Fer Frank Campo is the 103rd National Commander since our founding in 1920. The first Chef de Chemin de Fer was the founder Joseph W. Breen of Pennsylvania, along with the first Honorary Chef de Chemin de Fer Gen. John J. (Black Jack) Pershing following World War I. Former President Harry S. Truman was also a Honorary Chef de Chemin de Fer, serving for over 50 years in the Forty and Eight. Frank was born, raised, and educated in Springfield, IL. Following high school he enlisted in the United States Army as a combat engineer in 1983. His military service included several postings in the Continental United States, along with being stationed in Germany for three years during the Cold War. Upon separation from the military, he graduated from California State University San Bernardino with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and Paralegal Studies. He worked the next thirteen years with the United States Department of Justice as a federal law enforcement officer retiring in 2004. Frank then spent five years with the San Bernardino School District as both a safety officer and teacher. Always wanting to assist veterans, he spent the next twelve years with the State of California, as the state veteran’s representative for the Employment Development Department, retiring in 2021.

San Bernardino is the 103rd National Commander since our founding in 1920. The first Chef de Chemin de Fer was the founder Joseph W. Breen of Pennsylvania, along with the first Honorary Chef de Chemin de Fer Gen. John J. (Black Jack) Pershing following World War I. Former President Harry S. Truman was also a Honorary Chef de Chemin de Fer, serving for over 50 years in the Forty and Eight. Frank was born, raised, and educated in Springfield, IL. Following high school he enlisted in the United States Army as a combat engineer in 1983. His military service included several postings in the Continental United States, along with being stationed in Germany for three years during the Cold War. Upon separation from the military, he graduated from California State University San Bernardino with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and Paralegal Studies. He worked the next thirteen years with the United States Department of Justice as a federal law enforcement officer retiring in 2004. Frank then spent five years with the San Bernardino School District as both a safety officer and teacher. Always wanting to assist veterans, he spent the next twelve years with the State of California, as the state veteran’s representative for the Employment Development Department, retiring in 2021.

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Contributors: Mary Junell, Michelle Cebula, Rob Kenny, Anne Basa, Jacob Daniels, Lee Levells, Blaine Caracter, Thomas Cronin, Bradley Willette, Felicia Hall, Betty Lou Wingo, DMC Staff, PIA Staff.

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Viewpoints herein do not represent official policy.
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Design and Layout: Mary Junell, Art-Z Graphics, Inc

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