



# FSA *Now*

The Monthly Newsletter for FSA Staff

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## IN THIS ISSUE

FSA's Region of the  
Month: Denver

Page 2

Scenes from the New  
Orleans EAC

Page 4

Region IV holiday spirit

Page 5

My FSA interviews Bill  
Leith

Page 5

## FSA Helps Unveil New Identity Theft Campaign

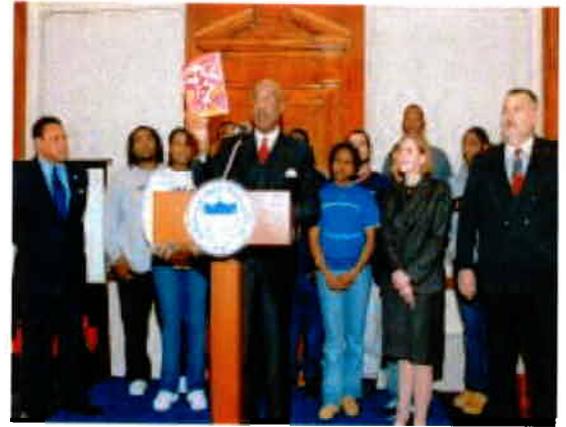
On December 11, Terri Shaw joined Secretary Rod Paige, Inspector General Jack Higgins and Howard University President H. Patrick Swygert to announce a new public awareness campaign sponsored by the Department to warn students about the dangers of Identity Theft. The objective of this program, a partnership between FSA and OIG, is to educate current students and borrowers in repayment about the threat of identity theft.

"Most students are well informed about the basic rules for protecting their physical well being and possessions—rules like walking in well-lit areas, traveling in groups and locking their doors and windows," said Secretary Paige. "But too many students don't know the basics of protecting their identity. Fortunately, with the proper safeguards, students can secure their personal information and prevent criminals from abusing their good name and record."

Identity Theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in the country. Last year, over 10 million Americans fell victim to identity thieves at a cost of over \$5 billion.

College students tend to be particularly vulnerable. For many, this is the first time they are leaving home and are just beginning to learn about personal finances. Credit card companies bombard students with offers without teaching them the importance of protecting their personal information. Schools sometimes accentuate the problem by posting grades by social security numbers.

"This is a very important resource for students all over the country because they are targeted groups for credit card companies and others interested in obtaining their personal information," said Howard University President H. Patrick Swygert. "As we make more and more technology



Secretary Paige shares *The Student Guide* with audience members as (left to right) Howard University President Swygert, Howard students, Terri Shaw and Inspector General Higgins look on.

available to them, we have an equal responsibility to make them aware of the pitfalls that go along with the territory."

FSA already updated publications such as the Student Guide and the High School Counselors Handbook with information on preventing identity theft. Beginning in April, all monthly billing statements will carry tips on how to protect your identity. *Student Aid on the Web* has incorporated a section on Identity Theft with other FSA sites expected to post information in the coming months to ensure schools and lenders join us in this effort.

The IG's office has launched a new online resource, [www.ed.gov/misused](http://www.ed.gov/misused), to warn students and families. They also launched a hotline, 1-800-MISUSED, to report suspected incidence of identity theft.

"By leveraging existing FSA and OIG resources, we're able to reach students, schools, and lenders to warn them about this growing problem," said Terri Shaw. "I think we have a responsibility to our students to ensure they avoid becoming victims of this growing problem."

*We Help Put America Through School*

# FSA in Denver



Region VIII staff members include (left to right): Mitch Cary, Asad Shahid, Linda Olson, Joe Hajek, Sherry Cole, Mary Jo Lally, Kerry Berryman, Mike Clark, Fran Susman and Dan Whiting.

## Q&A with Region VIII Area Case Director Harry Shriver

**What is the biggest challenge Region VIII is currently experiencing?**

With the exception of the front range of Colorado, we serve a very rural population spread over a large geographic area. As such, travel, especially in the winter, often provides unexpected surprises.

**Describe some projects Region VIII staff members are currently working on.**

For the past 20 years the Denver office has worked closely with many Tribally Controlled Colleges in their quest to provide educational opportunities. Currently, 18 of the approximately 32 tribal colleges are within our service area. Denver staff participates in several yearly training workshops conducted by and for these schools as well as providing individualized assistance as the need arises.

The Denver Case Team currently monitors five schools, or consortiums of schools, participating in the Distance Education Demonstration program. The growth of alternative educational delivery systems presents interesting challenges to the Team and the Department.

The Denver Case Team Systems Coordinator has contributed significantly to various School Eligibility Channel projects including data analysis, performance measures, eCMO and CMONET. These data and systems-based initiatives are the future of FSA.

*con't, page 3*

## Denver Facts & Attractions

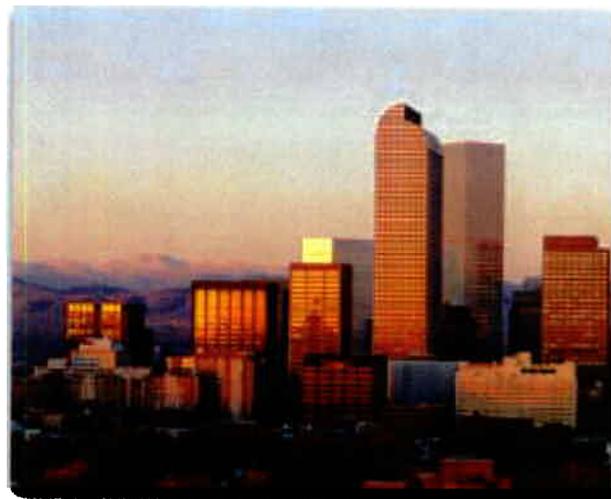
by, Region VIII staff member Sherry Cole

\* Denver is called the "Mile High City" because it is one mile high. However, it is, and always will be, the "Cow Town" of the West. Every January, Denver is host to the **National Western Stock Show**, which is held on the east side of downtown Denver. If the wind is just right, you will know it is here before you read about it in the local news! The Show attracts visitors from all over the world.

\* Does Denver have interesting people? You betcha boots we do! Denver has famous people that were born here, died in the city or just happened to change their last name to Denver.

Ever heard of John Denver, the famous singer? He was born Henry John Deutschendorf in New Mexico and took the stage name Denver from the city in his favorite Rocky Mountain state of Colorado.

Next on the list is the famous William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody. His grave and museum are located on Lookout Mountain, west of downtown Denver. Buffalo Bill was born in Iowa in 1846. He traveled all over the U.S., and he died in Denver in 1917 at his sister's home. Several cities wanted to be his final resting place, but Denver won out.



\* If you are into old Victorian homes, you must visit the **Molly Brown House Museum** in Denver. Margaret "Molly" Brown grew up in Leadville, CO, and married Johnny Brown. The couple struck it rich from a silver mine and moved to Denver. Margaret later got the name Molly from the movie "Unsinkable Molly Brown," but she was never called that in real life. Margaret was known for her bravery on a lifeboat when the Titanic sank in 1912.

\* If you need a place to stay while visiting the Stock Show, we recommend you visit the **Brown Palace Hotel** where even the Beatles slept, or try the **Oxford Hotel** - known as a romantic boutique hotel. Both places are worth the visit and hold lots of history.

*con't, page 3*

## Shriver Q & A, con't

Which three words best describe the Denver office? Why?

Efficiency, Customer Satisfaction and Trust.

The Denver team has always prided ourselves on maintaining a good working relationship with our schools and other customers. Within the framework of maintaining sound program integrity, we also build Trusting relationships with our schools, provide Customer Satisfaction related services and do so within an atmosphere of Dedication to the effective operation of the FSA programs.

What is the best thing about working in Denver?

'Tis a pleasure to live in Colorado! We are truly blessed to live in such a beautiful part of the country with all of its opportunities for outdoor activities.

Is there anything else you would like FSA to know about the Region VIII team?

Several members of the Denver FSA staff find time within their busy schedules to participate in various volunteer activities. One individual volunteers as a mentor for needy high school students to help them understand that college is possible. Another staff member has done volunteer work at the Ronald McDonald house, and a third has been very active in the Combined Federal Campaign over an extended period of time.

\* How about food ... After seeing all those cows, steers and sheep at the Stock Show, we recommend you visit the **Historic Buckhorn Exchange Restaurant** on Osage Street. This is Denver's oldest restaurant and is Denver's genuine Old West - a "must see" for everyone. If you go, watch out for all the animal heads hanging on the walls and remember to order Rocky Mountain Oysters.

\* We're not finished talking about food ... May we recommend, the **Alfred Packard Grill** at the University of Colorado, located in Boulder. In 1862, a man by the name of Alfred Packer was hired as a guide for five men crossing the mountains. Only Alfred made it out, fully nourished and no sign of missing a meal. Later, he was accused of cannibalism. A trial was held, and Alfred was found guilty. He later died in Denver in 1907. Historians love to recreate his trial because some people believe he was falsely accused.

\* Now, let's talk sports... We are home to our beloved football team the Denver Broncos. Go Broncos! During football season, we are Bronco-crazy fans. You want basketball ... how about the Denver Nuggets? After a few bad years, they are now first in their division. Our Colorado Avalanche hockey team is a contender for the Stanley Cup every year. In warmer weather, we have the Colorado Rockies baseball team. There is nothing like nachos, hot dogs and watching your home team win! In addition, we have an abundance of college sports including the University of Colorado Women's Basketball, University of Denver Hockey and lots of football.

\* We really are not a "Cow Town" - just foolin' with you folks! We actually have a theatre, called the Denver Center for the Performing Arts Complex, and we have the Denver Art Museum. We have Broadway shows, musicals and entertainment galore in Denver.

\* Hey, wait .... Skiing ... Did we almost forget to mention our world famous skiing? Since Denver is only 45 minutes away from the mountains, most people can go skiing in one-day trips and be back home for dinner. The beautiful Rocky Mountains and skiing are our #1 PASTTIME. So what do all good little children and adults in Denver want for the holidays? Skis and lift tickets!



*Borrower Services General Manager Tom Pestka shows off his "I survived the CSB competition" shirt at his recent retirement party. Tom is retiring on January 2, after more than 30 years of service in the Department.*

## FSA Now

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*FSA Now* is a monthly newsletter for FSA staff available on FSAnet. To share feedback or contribute ideas, e-mail FSA Communcations.

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# Scenes from the New Orleans EAC

On November 2-5, FSA hosted over 1,800 financial aid professionals in San Diego for the first of two Electronic Access Conferences (EAC). On December 2-5, FSA hosted over 2,000 additional financial aid professionals in New Orleans for the second EAC.

The conferences provide attendees with training and updates on Title IV programs.

The theme of this year's EAC is "Getting Aid Right." The conferences feature multiple general sessions, more than 40 interest sessions, a computer lab, hands-on training, a cyber cafe and an Ask a Fed desk.

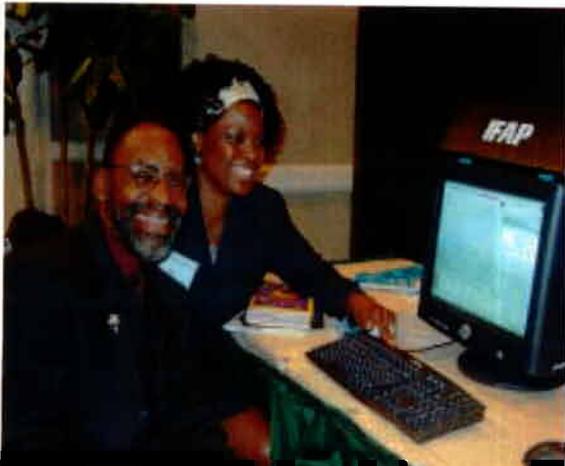
Next year's EACs are tentatively scheduled for November 1-4 in Orlando, Florida and November 30-December 3 in Las Vegas, Nevada. For questions on conference specifics, please visit the EAC Web site at <http://edeworkshop.ncspearson.com/welcome.htm>.



*Clarence Hicks assists two financial aid administrators with locating their session room.*



*Financial Partners Services' Larry Parker chats with Jamie Hyatt during the conference.*



*Larry McClain and Veda Montgomery share the IFAP information with financial aid administrators attending the Conference.*



# MyFSA

## FSA Now talked to new Deputy Director of Application Processing Bill Leith

**Q: Describe your role at FSA.**

**A:** As Deputy Director of Application Processing, I am trying to familiarize myself with all that we do. Right now my focus is mostly on operations, learning what we do and why we do it. Looking to the future, I think it is safe to say that I will be heavily involved with the Front-End Business Integration (FEBI) and other large initiatives such as the IRS data match, as well as making sure that we continue to provide exceptional services on a daily basis.

**Q: What has been, or will be, your biggest challenge in the Application Processing Division?**

**A:** I'm not sure I have been here long enough to know what the biggest challenges will be. Speaking broadly, I am sure that FEBI, the integration of our front-end business processes, will be a challenge in a very positive way. This initiative is going to force us to look closely at our business processes, which in my mind is always both challenging and necessary. Perhaps the biggest challenge will be for us to maintain the current level of service while positioning ourselves for the future. No matter what we do, we cannot compromise on the quality of services we provide each day.

**Q: Tell us about your previous professional experience. How will those experiences assist you in performing your duties at FSA?**

**A:** I have worked in a university setting for the past 18 years. Most

recently, I was Assistant Vice President and Director of Financial Aid at the University of Maryland. In that position I was responsible for all activities related to the administration of financial aid. In addition to the financial aid piece, I provided leadership to the ongoing university effort to provide integrated student services on the Web. While what we do at FSA is obviously different, it is also quite similar school financial aid administration in many ways. I think that my experience and understanding of the school setting will be very beneficial.

**Q: If you could describe yourself in three words, which words would you choose? Why?**

**A:** This is the toughest question that I don't think I can answer! I am reserved. I tend to approach problems by looking at the underlying processes and think about different solutions. Realizing this, I think it is important to understand why things are the way they are. I love being in an environment that recognizes that change is positive. I think it is very important to have a vision and to focus on that vision, no matter how grand it may seem. I also think it is important to maintain a good sense of humor!

**Q: What are your plans for this holiday season?**

**A:** Working and spending time with my family. The entire application process for 2004-05 goes live January 2.

## Region IV Holiday Spirit

In the spirit of sharing during the holidays, the Atlanta Service Center Division/Collections participated in the U.S. Marine Corps' Toys-for-Tots campaign. Santa's elves came in on a quiet Sunday morning to place a nine-foot holiday tree embellished with candy canes and white lights in the office foyer for everyone's enjoyment. An invitation to participate in collecting new toys was extended to the entire US Department of Education Atlanta Regional Office resulting in thousands of dollars in toys collected! Bicycles and helmets, karaoke machines, skateboards and helmets, numerous electronic games, books, Barbie dolls, trucks

cars, and soccer/football/basketballs were among the many toys collected. Thanks to Larry Lawhorn for assembling bicycles, Jane Meucci and Terri Coulston for their time putting up the holiday tree and shopping for toys, and the entire Region IV staff who assisted in making this holiday season very special for needy children.



*Region IV staff members pose with the gifts they contributed to the office's Toys-for-Tots campaign.*