



DIVERSITY@WORK

A PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT & EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY,
A PROGRAM OFFICE WITHIN VA'S OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION

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<<http://www.va.gov/dmeeo/ca/daw.htm>>

MARCH/APRIL 2006

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

The Great Place to Work Institute Defines a Great Workplace

Each year, the Great Place to Work Institute produces various lists of exemplary employers, including *Fortune Magazine's* "100 Best Companies to Work For." Companies are selected for the lists primarily on the basis of an employee survey, supplemented by a cultural audit of the company.

The cultural audit has two parts. The first part asks about employee demographics (the number of employees, the number of minority employees, voluntary turnover, tenure, etc.) and about employee benefits (on-site fitness centers, the percentage of insurance premiums paid by the company for their employees, the number of vacation and holiday days granted, etc.). The second part of the cultural audit asks open-ended questions about various aspects of the company's culture.

The employee survey consists of 57 statements that address credibility, respect, fairness, pride, and camaraderie—the five dimensions that correspond to the Institute's model of a great place to work.

At the heart of the Institute's definition of a great place to work—a place where employees "trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do, and enjoy the people they work with"—is the idea that a great workplace is measured by the quality of three, interconnected relationships: the relationship between employees and management; the relationship between employees and their jobs (or with the company); and the relationship between employees and other employees.

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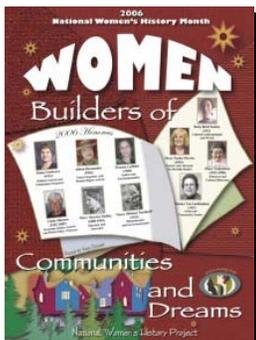
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CELEBRATE!

National Women's History Month

VA proudly joins the Nation in celebrating Women's History Month during March. National Women's History Month grew from an effort to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of women in American history.

In 1980, President Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation calling on the American people to remember the contributions of women. By 1987, fourteen governors had declared March as Women's History Month and, that same year, Congress and the President followed by declaring March as National Women's History Month.



This year's theme,

"Women: Builders of Communities and Dreams," honors the spirit of possibility and hope set in motion by generations of women in their creation of communities and their encouragement of dreams.

Overall, VA employment of women grew to 58.57 percent in fiscal year (FY) 2005. Women in the leadership pipeline also grew to 35.51 percent in FY 2005. Women veterans among women employees grew to 11.46 percent in FY 2005. Take time to honor these women for delivering vital health care, benefits, and memorials to our Nation's veterans and their families.

Managers and supervisors are encouraged to plan observance activities this month and throughout the year. For more observance resources, visit www.va.gov/dmeeo. To learn more about VA's National Women's Program, contact Wanda J. Jones at (202) 501-2089 or wanda.jones@va.gov. ■

BOOKMARKS

- ▶ **American Indian Disability Technical Assistance Center**
<http://aidtac.ruralinstitute.unt.edu>
- ▶ **Asian American Government Executives Network**
www.aagen.org
- ▶ **The Black Women's Agenda, Inc.**
www.blackwomensagenda.org
- ▶ **Hired Interested and Ready Employees in the U.S.**
www.hireus.cds.hawaii.edu
- ▶ **Hispanic Women's Corporation**
www.hispanicwomen.org
- ▶ **Organization of Chinese Americans**
www.oceanatl.org
- ▶ **Proyecto Vision**
www.proyectovision.net
- ▶ **The Workforce Recruitment Program**
www.wrpjobs.com

Contact information for other diversity-related organizations can be found on the DM&EEO Web site at: www.va.gov/dmeeo/org

FIELD NOTES

News You Can Use

Have You Considered an Intern?

The Hispanic Association for Colleges and Universities (HACU) is now accepting intern requests through March 17, 2006. The 10-week summer session work date is June 5 through August 11. The selection deadline will be April 7. To obtain a copy of the 2006 National Internship Resource Guide for more information about HACU and similar internship programs, visit www.va.gov/dmeeo/docs/06NationalInternship.pdf. The process to post, review, and select a HACU intern is accessible on the Web. To post an intern request, log in through your HACU National Internship Program user account at www.hnip.net/agency. If there are any questions, please contact your Human Resource Liaison or designated person who manages the National Internship Program within your organization. If you do not have a login password, please contact either Sandra Penaherrera or Alexandria Rosales at (202) 467-0893 or via e-mail at spenaherrera@hacu.net or arosales@hacu.net.

If there are any questions regarding VA's National Internship Program, please contact Brenda A. Martin, National Internship Program Coordinator, at

(202) 501-2099 or brenda.martin@va.gov.

Diversity News

Look for the March and April episodes of DM&EEO's monthly news program, *Diversity News*, on the VA Knowledge Network's Communications Channel 2. The March broadcast focuses on methods of team building and describes several online courses, available through the VA Learning University, which may help employees understand these issues. The April episode is dedicated to what it means to be an "employer of choice" and highlights some best practices. The programs also include updates to the 2006 diversity calendar.

Also, we want to hear from you! If you'd like to share your story ideas, comments, or suggestions for *Diversity News*, please e-mail us at dmeeo@va.gov with the words DIVERSITY NEWS in the subject line.

New Faces

Interns Wallys Martinez (HACU) and Javier Pompa (The Washington Center) will be assisting with DM&EEO's special initiatives. Welcome!■

WEB SITE SPOTLIGHT

Federally Employed Women (FEW)

www.few.org

Content: Federally Employed Women (FEW) is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1969 shortly after the Government issued Executive Order 11375 which added sex-discrimination to the list of prohibited discrimination within the Federal Government. Although E.O. 11375 was an important milestone, several women were concerned that the Civil Service Commission and individual agencies may not put forth the vigorous effort necessary to ensure compliance with E.O. 11375. Although the Federal Women's Program (FWP) had been established, the early organizers of FEW wanted to ensure that there would always be an organization dedicated to promoting equality for women and addressing concerns of women in the Federal workforce.

As a private organization, FEW works as a constructive pressure group to improve the status of women employed by the Federal Government. This includes contact with Congress to encourage progressive legislation. FEW national officers meet with management officials at all levels of agencies to demonstrate support of the FWP, encourage officials to support the program and to obtain insight on the effectiveness of the FWP at agency and local levels.

FEW is a membership organization working for the elimination of sexual harassment and the advancement of women in Government. This will be accomplished by:

- ▶ Encouraging diversity and equity in the workplace.
- ▶ Enhancing career opportunities for women.
- ▶ Establishing and maintaining relationships with organizations to advocate the fair application of EEO and personnel laws, policies, procedures, and practices.
- ▶ Improving the quality of life for women by influencing Congressional and Administration actions.
- ▶ Committing to achieve and maintain a unified and diverse membership.
- ▶ Providing opportunities for professional growth through leadership development, education, mentoring, and networking.

Must-See Feature: Link to FEW's 37th National Training Program from July 17–21, 2006, in Atlanta, Georgia.

Contact Info: (202) 898-0994
1666 K Street, NW, Suite 440
Washington, DC 20006

Accessibility: No information offered.■

CHEROKEE INSPIRED COMFORT AWARD

Award Recipients Set the Example

For putting the needs of the injured, sick, and isolated first, often at their own physical risk or personal sacrifice, 14 individuals have been named the 2005 winners of the Cherokee Inspired Comfort Award. This prestigious honor is given annually to outstanding healthcare professionals by Cherokee Uniforms, a leading manufacturer of healthcare apparel. This year's winners represent 11 states and a cross-section of healthcare facilities, from rural clinics, nursing homes, and ambulance services, to internationally renowned medical centers and community hospitals. This year, the prize winners include two VA employees—Debra Watkins, Registered Nurse (RN) at the Dayton VA



Medical Center in Ohio, and Cari James, Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) at the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona.

"We established the Cherokee Inspired Comfort Award to call attention to the immense dedication, compassion and skill that nurses and healthcare professionals demonstrate every day," said Michael

Singer, president and CEO of Cherokee Uniforms. "We hope the winners' stories will inspire all healthcare workers to continue giving their best. We also hope they encourage America's bright young men and women to consider nursing and other vital, rewarding healthcare professions."

As a national prize winner under the RN category, Ms. Watkins is a nurse manager in the intensive care unit at the Dayton VA Medical Center, where she has cared for the Nation's veterans for about 20 years. She once risked her own life to pull a lifeless woman and her husband from a vehicle involved in a head-on collision just before it exploded. She revived the critically injured woman and received national recognition for her courageous act.

Grand prize winner under the LPN/Licensed Vocational Nurses category, Ms. James also serves as the Minority Veterans Coordinator at the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center. She helped coordinate the donation of a \$52,000 wheelchair-accessible van to help veterans of the Navajo Nation to access vital VA medical services. Ms. James also helped form an association of veterans representing 21 Arizona tribes to address healthcare benefits, housing, and education—a national model to help American Indian veterans to express their common needs with a centralized voice.

The grand prize winner in each category will receive an all-expense-paid Caribbean cruise for two. Additional prize winners in each category will each receive an all-expense-paid trip to a 2006 U.S. medical conference of his or her choice and an annual membership to a preferred clinical association. Additionally, top national prize winners will receive a donation of \$500 to the nonprofit organization of his or her choice. All award winners will receive a trophy, a medical wardrobe of Cherokee scrubs and Rockers footwear, and will be included in the nationally distributed Cherokee 2006 Inspired Comfort Award calendar.

Since the Cherokee Inspired Comfort Award was established in 2003, more than 3,400 healthcare professionals have been nominated. A panel of nursing professionals and Cherokee representatives evaluates nominations and grants the awards. Cherokee Uniforms will be accepting nominations for the 2006 Cherokee Inspired Comfort Award beginning March 1, 2006 through May 31, 2006. For further information, please visit www.CherokeeUniforms.com.

Sections of the preceding article were excerpted from a PR Newswire report, available at [www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=104&STORY=/www/story/01-10-2006/0004246525&EDATE=.](http://www.prnewswire.com/cgi-bin/stories.pl?ACCT=104&STORY=/www/story/01-10-2006/0004246525&EDATE=)

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

(Continued from Page 1)

In a study of companies that have made Fortune Magazine's list of 100 Best Companies to Work For, the Hay Group, a human resources consulting firm, found that many of the firms have several goals in common: they offer employees a clear sense of direction and vision; they create a culture that puts a high priority on quality, teamwork, and customer service; they understand and respect the connection between people and success; they

provide the basic requirements for employees to succeed; they maintain fair and equitable compensation and benefits; they reduce status differences and barriers, and they showcase some aspect of the company that makes it "special."

For more information about what it takes to make a workplace great, visit the Great Place to Work Institute's Web site, www.greatplacetowork.com.

Diversity@Work

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OTHER USEFUL LINKS

Department of Veterans Affairs
www.va.gov

VA's Office of Human Resources & Administration
www.va.gov/ofcadmin/portal

VA's Office of Resolution Management
www.va.gov/orm

VA's Office of Human Resources Management and Labor Relations
www.va.gov/ohrm

DM&EEO ONLINE



The mission of DM&EEO is to provide leadership in creating and sustaining a diverse workplace free of discrimination at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Here's a sampling of online tools available on DM&EEO's redesigned Web site that can help you promote the employment of veterans, women, minorities, and people with disabilities:

- ▶ Women's History Month and other special observance resources.
- ▶ 2006 events, conferences, conventions, and programs.
- ▶ Links to professional and community organizations.

2006 DIVERSITY CALENDAR

MARCH

National Women's History Month
March

Irish-American Heritage Month
March

International Women's Day
March 8

Deaf History Month
March 13–April 15

Pacific Rim Conference on Disabilities
March 13–15; Waikiki, HI
www.pacrim.hawaii.edu

DeafNation Expo
March 18; Orlando, FL
www.deafnation.com

CAREERS & the disABLED Magazine's Career Expo
March 23; New York, NY
www.eop.com

National Hispanic Medical Association 10th Annual Conference
March 23–26; Washington, DC
www.nhmamd.org

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities 11th Annual National Capitol Forum on Hispanic Higher Education
March 26–28; Washington, DC
www.hacu.net

Family Support America's 25th Anniversary Conference
March 26–29; Chicago, IL
www.familysupportamerica.org

APRIL

20th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic
April 2–7; Snowmass, CO
www.va.gov/vetevent/wsc/2006/default.cfm

Great Place to Work Conference
April 5–7; Boston, MA
www.greatplacetowork-conference.com

Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists 17th Annual National Leadership Conference
April 6–9; El Paso, TX
www.maes-natl.org

National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day
April 9

The Summit on Leading Diversity
April 10–12; Atlanta, GA
www.linkageinc.com

Abilities Expo
April 21–23; Edison, NJ
www.abilitiesexpo.com

Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day
April 27
www.daughtersandsonstowork.org

Jewish Heritage Week
April 30–May 6

For more events, visit www.va.gov/dmeeo and select the Calendar link.
