LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2005

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 10:30 a.m., in room SD–116, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Wayne Allard (chairman) presiding.

Present: Senators Allard, Cochran, and Durbin.

U.S. SENATE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

STATEMENT OF EMILY REYNOLDS, SECRETARY OF THE SENATE

ACCOMPANIED BY:

MARY SUIT JONES, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE SENATE
TIM WINEMAN, FINANCIAL CLERK OF THE SENATE

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR WAYNE ALLARD

Senator ALLARD. The Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations, will come to order. We meet today to hear testimony from the Secretary of the Senate and the Architect of the Capitol on the fiscal year 2006 budget requests.

It's my first hearing as chairman of this subcommittee, and I look forward to learning about the key issues and budget priorities within each of the legislative branch agencies.

Overall, the request for the legislative branch totals $4.03 billion, an increase of $482 million, or a 13.5 percent increase over the fiscal year 2005 level. Clearly, in the constrained budget environment in which we will be operating, an increase of this level will be difficult, if not impossible to provide, so we will be seeking to ensure that all agencies have prioritized their budget requests, are taking steps to operate as cost effectively as possible, and are eliminating wasteful or unnecessary spending.

Welcome to our witnesses this morning. We will hear first from Emily Reynolds, Secretary of the Senate, who's accompanied by the Assistant Secretary of the Senate, Mary Suit Jones, and the Financial Clerk of the Senate, Tim Wineman.

Ms. Reynolds, your budget request totals almost $23 million, an increase of about 7 percent over fiscal year 2005, primarily to accommodate routine pay and inflation-related increases, as well as to make some upgrades in a few areas.

Following the Secretary of the Senate, we will take testimony from Mr. Alan Hantman, Architect of the Capitol. The AOC budget request totals $506 million, an increase of $157 million over the current fiscal year. The increase is largely associated with several construction projects, including completion of the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC), construction of the Library of Congress storage modules at Fort Meade, Maryland, and a new offsite delivery facility for the Capitol Police, as well as startup costs and new personnel for the CVC.

Your budget office is to be commended for putting together a budget justification which is transparent and thorough and explains all increases concisely, and we certainly appreciate that effort.

There are a number of issues I'd like to explore with you today. Most important, of course, is the schedule and budget for completion of the Capitol Visitor Center. As I understand it, while much progress has been made, there's still a long way to go before the facility can be opened to the public, and the schedule remains unclear. There have been significant difficulties with this project, including coordinating two major construction contractors, weather-related delays, unforeseen site conditions, and, frankly, serious management problems. While it is too late to make major changes to how the project is being run, it is my expectation that you will make every effort to demand the best from your contractors, provide the Congress with a balanced assessment of progress as the project continues, and accept the counsel of the Government Accountability Office (GAO), which has been monitoring the project, providing recommendations from the start. GAO has done a very professional job in this oversight effort, and we appreciate this. Their projections on cost and schedule have been accurate, and their recommendations have been good.

In addition to the CVC, there continues to be much construction activity around this campus. One of the primary reasons is security-related work that will continue even after the CVC is complete. All of us have construction fatigue and look forward to when this complex can be returned to a state that we can all be proud of, free of construction activity, dump trucks, jersey barriers, and torn-up streets. So we will be urging you to accelerate these efforts, which have been in the works for many years now.

The perimeter security project and the visitor center seem to be emblematic of problems this agency continues to have with project management. As I understand it, about half of the major projects AOC has underway at this time are behind schedule, and too many are over budget, as well. We look forward to hearing what you're doing to improve project management.

There are also concerns with the morale of your workforce. Highlighted in an article a few weeks back in The Hill newspaper, it seems that communication with employees is not as good as it should be. So we look forward to an update on how you're improving communication and employee morale.

Finally, the AOC has been working to develop a long-range master plan for the Capitol complex, as well as condition assessments of each of the buildings. This should lead to a plan for prioritizing spending for both capital projects and deferred maintenance over the next 5 years. The master planning effort has been underway for some time, so we look forward to understanding when we will have a final product and a roadmap for future budget requirements.

We will now turn to the Secretary of the Senate. I welcome you to the subcommittee and look forward to your testimony, Ms. Reynolds. And you may proceed.

OPENING STATEMENT OF EMILY REYNOLDS

Ms. REYNOLDS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And we look forward to working with you, as our legislative branch subcommittee chairman.

I would ask, of course, that my full statement, which includes our complete Department reports, be submitted for the record. And today I'd like to take just a few minutes to give you a brief overview of the Secretary's operation and, of course, as you referenced, our budget request for fiscal year 2006.

Along with Mary Suit Jones and Tim Wineman, who, as you said, are here today, we have a good representation of our some 26 department heads, an able team and a tremendous group of individuals who serve the Senate.

Our budget request, as you said, is right at $23 million, representing almost $21 million in salary costs and $1.9 million in operating costs. This is a slight increase from fiscal year 2005, mostly in COLA and merit increases, so that we can continue to attract and retain the kind of talent the Senate requires and, indeed, deserves for its operations. We also have a small increase of $200,000 in that operating budget to prepare specifically for a specialized and much-needed storage space for our curator and upcoming relocations for Senate security and our closed-captioning services operation. We also anticipate some additional costs for the support and maintenance of systems that are currently underway—systems upgrades that are currently underway in both the gift shop and the stationery room.

Since the first Secretary was elected by the Senate in 1789, our office has served the Senate in three principal ways; that is, to provide legislative, financial, and administrative support. And I'd like to briefly highlight some our accomplishments from last year in each of these areas.

The legislative department, of course, consists of nine offices dedicated to ensuring that the Senate can carry out its constitutional responsibilities. And, to that end, one of our priorities remains the crosstraining among their specialties. In election years, our parliamentarians play a key and perhaps even little-known role. Following the elections, the parliamentarian must attest to the accuracy of each State's certificate of election for Senate races, a process that we have to have completed, obviously, before our Members can be sworn in. The parliamentarian also reviews the electoral ballots for the President and Vice President, and assists the Vice President and his staff in preparation for the joint session of Congress to count those electoral ballots.

On the financial side, our disbursing office pays the Senate community every 2 weeks, of roughly 6,500 individuals, and we process over 125,000 bills each year. Of course, as you well know, this office also administers health insurance, life insurance, and all of the retirement programs for our Members and staff.

We continue to make significant progress on the implementation of the financial management information system (FMIS), a 5-year strategic plan which this subcommittee generously provided the funding for now 3 years ago. Of course, FMIS' high priority is to provide efficiency, accountability, and ease of use for the 140 Senate offices that rely on the disbursing operation.

On the administrative side of our operation, there were several noteworthy accomplishments from last year. With the assistance of our Senate curator, late next month we will unveil the portrait of former Majority Leader George Mitchell, and, soon after, we will add to our collection the portrait of another Maine Senator, Margaret Chase Smith. We have underway a commission to add to the Senate reception room a portrait to commemorate the authors of the Connecticut Compromise, Senators Ellsworth and Sherman.

You might well have seen the "Catalogue of Fine Art", which we released last year, a beautiful piece of work. We hope to add a companion piece this Congress, the Senate "Catalogue of Graphic Art", which will be a compilation of our collection of 900 historic engravings and lithographs.

And one of the most exciting initiatives we have underway, which this subcommittee has generously supported, is our work with the Senate Curatorial Advisory Board, which has now completed its second meeting. The board provides us with expert advice regarding our collections and preservation program. It's a group of 12 highly knowledgeable and esteemed experts in their fields of art, preservation, architecture, and they are giving generously of their time and talent to the Senate.

In addition, our newly formed Senate Preservation Board of Trustees will meet next month. This group will supplement the work of the Curatorial Advisory Board and assist us in acquisitions and to facilitate preservation projects for the Senate. You may recall that your former colleague from Colorado, Senator Campbell, sent us on a search for a chair that was given to Vice President Charles Curtis to celebrate his Native American heritage. And that chair, now on loan to us—the search was victorious—and the chair now resides in the Vice President's ceremonial office.

Since that acquisition, I'm pleased to report we've made progress on other fronts, as well. We have subsequently acquired a Brumidi oil sketch, which was a preliminary treatment for the signing of the first Treaty of Peace with Great Britain, which, of course, in its finished form, is on the first floor of the Capitol, in the Brumidi corridors. And I would add, just coincidentally, this year happens to mark the 200th anniversary of Brumidi's birth. We are working with the Architect of the Capitol on several ways that we can commemorate that historic occasion in the Capitol this summer.

Our historical office also came into possession, this last year, of a wonderful treasure of scrapbooks that contain photographs of nearly 900 Senators, from the Senate's early days up to the early 20th century. Many of these were from Members for whom we had no prior photograph or record. Some we believe may even be the photographs done by Matthew Brady, the very famous Civil War photographer. This treasure actually came to us from a lifelong

Washington resident. He grew up on Capitol Hill, and one of his fondest memories is that he was often walked to school by Chief Justice Taft. Thanks to his generosity, our historical office is now putting together, for the first time ever, a pictorial directory of the images of all Senators who have served since 1789, by State and class.

While we focus on the rich history and tradition of the Senate in the Secretary's office, we certainly don't ignore the fact that technology continues to dramatically change the way we deliver services to the Senate in this 21st century. The Senate Library, for example, just late last year completed an ambitious project to provide its entire catalog online through the Senate intranet, Webster, so you can now review our catalog of 158,000 items literally from your desk. In addition, the use of our public website, senate.gov, continues to grow, a 9 percent increase last year, with almost 3.3 million visitors per month.

The second of our two mandated systems, the Legislative Information System (LIS), is a technological achievement, in and of itself. I'm delighted to report that, already in this Congress, working in conjunction with the Office of Senate Legislative Counsel, we've used this system to draft legislation, and 75 percent of the introduced and reported bills have been created as XML documents through this project. Once again, this subcommittee has generously supported that initiative.

And, quickly, there are two special projects I want to mention that don't necessarily fall tidily within our mission of legislative, financial, and administrative responsibilities, but they are two projects that we have the unique opportunity to work on in election and inaugural years. In November, we organized and executed the orientation program for our nine new Senators, their spouses, and staffs, and we were very fortunate to have the guidance of four of your colleagues, current Members, Senators Alexander, Carper, Pryor, and Voinovich, who wanted to set a new standard for orientation. And, thanks to their leadership, I believe we did, with an intensive 4-day program, with over two dozen Senators, on a bipartisan basis, serving as facilitators and instructors for their new colleagues.

Our staff was also honored to assist the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies in the preparation and execution of the 55th inaugural. From the closed-captioners, who provided the captioning for the jumbotrons, to the curator and Historian serving on the JCCIC website design team, it was really our honor to take a small role in that presentation.

Our operation, as you can see, is one that relies heavily on its human capital. While our operating budget is small, it is the teamwork, it is our employees, that make the Secretary's operation click. We are collaborative partners in so many ways, and in so many different levels within our departments themselves, within the office, also with disbursing, reaching out to administrative managers on the applications of FMIS. We work closely with Mr. Hantman and the entire team in the Architect's office, on the construction issues, and the planning of the CVC. And, finally, in so many ways, we're joined with the Sergeant at Arms in the ongoing important effort of continuity of Government planning and preparation.

PREPARED STATEMENT

It's a real privilege to be part of that team and to serve as the Senate's 31st Secretary, to be part of that rich tradition and heritage of the Senate, but also to be planning and preparing for its future. On balance, I believe we've presented a budget for you today that will enable us to continue to provide the best possible legislative, financial, and administrative services to the United States Senate.

I thank you for your time and look forward to any questions. Thank you, sir.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF EMILY J. REYNOLDS

Mr. Chairman, Senator Durbin and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your invitation to present testimony in support of the budget request of the Office of the Secretary of the Senate for fiscal year 2006.

Detailed information about the work of the 26 departments of the Office of the Secretary is provided in the annual reports which follow. I am pleased to provide this statement to highlight the achievements of the Office and the outstanding work of our dedicated employees.

My statement includes: Presenting the fiscal year 2006 budget request; implementing mandated systems: Financial Management Information System (FMIS) and Legislative Information System (LIS); Capitol Visitor Center; continuity of operations planning; and maintaining and improving current and historic legislative, financial and administrative services.

PRESENTING THE FISCAL YEAR 2006 BUDGET REQUEST

I am requesting a total fiscal year 2006 budget of $22,766,000.

The fiscal year 2006 budget request is comprised of $20,866,000 in salary costs and $1,900,000 for the operating budget of the Office of the Secretary. The salary budget represents an increase over the fiscal year 2005 budget as a result of (1) the costs associated with the annual Cost of Living Adjustment in the amount of $672,000 and (2) an additional $608,000 for merit increases and other staffing. The operating budget represents an increase for (1) costs to be incurred for the support and maintenance of systems upgrades for the gift shop and stationery room and (2) costs to be incurred for the Curator's storage space along with the relocation of Senate Security and Captioning Services.

The net effect of my total budget request for fiscal year 2006 is an increase of $1,480,000.

Our request in the operating budget is a sound one, enabling us to meet our operating needs and provide the necessary services to the United States Senate through our legislative, financial and administrative offices.

In reference to the salary budget, first and foremost, this request will enable us to continue to attract and retain talented and dedicated individuals to serve the needs of the United States Senate.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY APPORTIONMENT SCHEDULE

Item	Amount available fiscal year 2005, Public Law 108–447	Budget estimate fiscal year 2006	Difference
Departmental operating budget:			
Executive office	$525,000	$550,000	+$25,000
Administrative services	1,135,000	1,290,000	+155,000
Legislative services	40,000	60,000	+20,000
Total operating budget	1,700,000	1,900,000	+200,000

IMPLEMENTING MANDATED SYSTEMS

Two systems critical to our operation are mandated by law, and I would like to spend a few moments on each to highlight recent progress, and to thank the committee for your ongoing support of both.

Financial Management Information System (FMIS)

The Financial Management Information System, or FMIS, is used by approximately 140 offices (100 Senators' offices, 20 Committees and 20 Leadership and support offices). Consistent with our five year strategic plan, the Disbursing Office continues to modernize processes and applications to meet the continued demand by our Senate offices for efficiency, accountability and ease of use. Our goal is to move to a paperless voucher system, improve the Web-FMIS system, and make payroll and accounting system improvements.

During fiscal year 2004 and the first half of fiscal year 2005, specific progress made on the FMIS project included:

—Web FMIS has been completely rewritten as a "zero-client" application accessed via a website, "webfmis.senate.gov". Our implementation began in August 2004 with a pilot of 15 offices, including Senators, Committees and Leadership & Support offices. During the Fall, it continued for new office managers, and in January the intranet version of Web FMIS was provided to the new offices of the 109th Congress. As of the end of March, it was in use by 60 offices. Roll out to the remaining offices has been announced with a schedule of completion by the end of April.

—The new version of Web FMIS provides functionality desired by the Web FMIS users group, which participated in the design process. The functionality enjoyed most by users is the automatic determination of funding year to which a payment is charged based on the obligation start date. This seemingly small change has improved efficiency and reduced mistakes substantially. Additionally, it has no files on the users PC, which improves our ability to function in a disaster recovery situation.

—For the SAVI system, which enables Senate staff to create Expense Summary Reports online and to check the status of reimbursement payments, over a course of several upgrades, we provided additional user functionality. Specifically, the upgrades enabled users to prepare and submit Non-travel Expense Summary Reports (in addition to Travel Expense Summary Reports), to request e-mail notification of payments made via direct deposit, to define their own logon ids and to maintain their own e-mail addresses; completed security enhancements; and implemented a simplified web address "savi.senate.gov" and architectural changes, which simplify disaster recovery infrastructure at the ACF.

—As a non-Treasury disbursing office, the Senate pays bills via direct deposit and checks. During 2004, we made substantial progress on both fronts.

  —In March 2004, we implemented use of laser checks. Staff and vendors not receiving payments via direct deposit now receive checks printed on a laser printer. This has several benefits. Use of a standard laser printer enhances our ability to work off-site, should the need arise, and produces a higher quality print which prevents negotiation of checks for an unintended dollar amount and helps the Postal Service to deliver checks. Use of laser checks required that the U.S. Treasury create a check and stub form for use by the Senate.

  —In May 2004, we offered direct deposit payment to all external vendors. In 2002, we began making reimbursements to Senate staff via direct deposit and in June 2003 we made our first direct deposit payments to external vendors on a pilot basis. Of the approximately 6,000 non-payroll payments made in February 2005, overall, 59 percent were made via direct deposit; of the approximately 2,000 reimbursements to Senate staff, 87 percent were made via direct deposit and of the approximately 4,000 payments to external vendors, 47 percent were made via direct deposit.

—The Sergeant at Arms staff use ADPICS and FAMIS, the mainframe components of FMIS, for procurement activities. In 2004 we contracted with Bearing Point to make system and reporting enhancements to these systems that align system functionality with SAA business practices. By the end of March 2005, the requirements for the system enhancements were approved by the SAA staff and the reports were delivered for testing.

—One of the goals of FMIS is to implement paperless voucher processing. This requires implementation of electronic signatures, and imaging of supporting documentation, both of which present complex and challenging issues. Our focus has been on revising the requirements for these functions, including a phased approach for implementation (i.e., a pilot vs. long term). In addition, we assessed the risks associated with paperless voucher processing, identified policy and process issues to be resolved, and began to analyze the appropriate hardware/software acquisition strategy.

—Disaster operation services for FMIS are provided at the Alternate Computer Facility. In December 2004, we conducted an intensive two-day test of operating critical FMIS subsystems at this location. Our tests of all mainframe systems (i.e., payroll, ADPICS and FAMIS) were successful and we were able to simulate making payroll and voucher payments via direct deposit and check. Additionally, we were able to create, post, and print documents via Web FMIS and ADPICS. Document printing has always presented problems during past tests at other facilities; however, the system configuration at the ACF has resolved this problem.

—The computing infrastructure for FMIS is provided by the Sergeant at Arms. Each year upgrades are made to the infrastructure software. The major upgrade this year is implementation of a new version of the mainframe operating system software, "Z/OS", scheduled for the end of April 2005. This required two steps, installation of an upgrade to the current operating system, OS390, which was completed in October 2004, and the upcoming implementation of Z/OS. These upgrades require FMIS testing, both before implementation to identify and resolve any incompatibilities, and after implementation to verify that all functions are working properly.

During the remainder of fiscal year 2005 the following FMIS activities are anticipated:

—Complete implementing the intranet version of Web FMIS in all Senate offices.

—Implementing the system and reporting enhancements for the Sergeant at Arms.

—Completing analysis of the appropriate hardware/software acquisition strategy for electronic signatures, and imaging of supporting documentation, and begin acquisition.

—Conducting an additional test of FMIS functionality at the Alternate Computing Facility, including testing two FMIS sub-systems, Web FMIS reports and SAVI, that were not previously tested.

—Implementing e-mail notification to vendors of payments made via direct deposit.

During fiscal year 2006 the following FMIS activities are anticipated:

—Conducting a pilot of the technology for paperless payment. This assumes identification of satisfactory hardware and software for electronic signatures and imaging of supporting documentation, and resolution of related policy and process issues.

—Developing requirements for integrating the Funds Advance Tracking System (FATS system) into FMIS. The FATS system, a stand-alone PC-based system, tracks election cycle information used in the voucher-review process, and tracks travel advances and petty cash advances against dollar maximum and total allocation rules.

—Implementing on-line distribution of payroll system reports.

A more detailed report on FMIS is included in the departmental report of the Disbursing Office which follows.

Legislative Information System (LIS)

The LISAP project team is developing the Senate's legislative editing XML application (LEXA), and the Office of the Senate Legislative Counsel (SLC) began using it last year to draft legislation. The SLC offered valuable feedback throughout the year regarding LEXA's continued development as existing features were enhanced and additional document types, such as amendments and reported bills, were added to LEXA. The use of LEXA by the SLC has gradually increased, and so far in the 109th Congress, approximately 75 percent of the introduced and reported bills have been created as XML documents. The LISAP project team is now working with the Office of the Enrolling Clerk toward preparing engrossed and enrolled bills in XML.

The document management system (DMS) for the SLC will be implemented once the SLC has completed the transition from XyWrite to LEXA and a substantial number of drafts are created in XML. The SLC's DMS will be integrated with LEXA and will provide a powerful tracking, management, and delivery tool. The software used to convert locator documents to XML was updated to provide a more robust tool, and a joint project to convert the compilations of current law to an XML format is nearing completion.

The Government Printing Office (GPO) also began using LEXA last year to prepare and print XML documents as requested and to provide support for LEXA as directed in the 2004 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act. GPO took over maintenance and support of the coding and style sheet portion of LEXA that converts an XML document to locator for printing through Microcomp. GPO also developed the style sheet that will be used to display XML documents on the LIS website (www.congress.gov) and on thomas.loc.gov in a format that more closely resembles the printed document (without page and line numbers).

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER

While the Architect of the Capitol directly oversees this massive and impressive project, I would like to briefly mention the ongoing involvement of the Secretary's office in this endeavor. My colleague, the Clerk of the House, and I continue to facilitate weekly meetings with senior staff of the joint leadership of Congress to address and hopefully quickly resolve issues that might impact the status of the project or the operations of Congress in general.

In addition, I also facilitate weekly meetings with the Architect's office for the senior staff of the Senate Sergeant at Arms, Capitol Police, Rules Committee and Appropriations Committee, to address the expansion space plans for the Senate and any issues with regard to the CVC's construction that may directly impact Senate operations.

Although the construction creates numerous temporary inconveniences to Senators, staff and visitors, completion of the Capitol Visitor Center will bring substantial improvements in enhanced security and visitor amenities, and its educational benefits for our visitors will be tremendous.

CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

The Office of the Secretary maintains a Continuity of Operations (COOP) program to ensure that the Senate can fulfill its constitutional obligations under any circumstances. Plans are in place to support Senate floor operations both on and off Capitol Hill, and to permit each department within the Office of the Secretary to perform its essential functions during and after an emergency.

COOP planning in the Office of the Secretary began in late 2000. Since that time, we have successfully implemented COOP plans during the anthrax and ricin incidents, and have conducted roughly one dozen drills and exercises to test and refine our plans. In conjunction with the Senate Sergeant at Arms, Capitol Police, the Office of the Attending Physician, and the Architect of the Capitol, we have established and exercised Emergency Operations Centers, Briefing Centers and Alternate Senate Chambers, both on and off Capitol Hill.

In addition, we have identified equipment, supplies and other items critical to the conduct of essential functions, and have assembled "fly-away kits" for the Senate Chamber, and for each department of the Office of the Secretary. Multiple copies of each fly-away kit have been produced. Some are stored in our offices, and backup kits are stored nearby but off the main campus, as well as at other sites outside the District of Columbia. This approach will enable the Office of the Secretary to resume essential operations in 12 to 24 hours, even if there is no opportunity to retrieve anything from our offices.

Today, the Office of the Secretary is prepared to do the following in the event of an emergency: support Senate Floor operations in an Alternate Senate Chamber within twelve hours on campus, and in 24 to 72 hours off campus, depending upon location; support an emergency legislative session at a Briefing Center, if required; support Briefing Center Operations at any of three designated locations within one hour; and activate an Emergency Operations Center on campus or at Postal Square within one hour.

Activities in the Past Year

During the past year, the Office of the Secretary continued to update, refine and exercise emergency preparedness plans and operations. Specific activities included the following: Activated an Emergency Operations Center, Leadership Coordination Center and selected departmental COOP plans during the ricin incident response; participated in the Capitol Police Incident Command during the ricin incident response; provided supplies to temporary offices in the Capitol and Postal Square during the ricin incident response; conducted an offsite Alternate Chamber exercise and a Briefing Center exercise; and reviewed and updated the COOP plans of all departments of the Office of the Secretary.

The central mission of the Office of the Secretary is to provide the legislative, financial and administrative support required for the conduct of Senate business. Our emergency preparedness programs are designed to ensure that the Senate can carry out its Constitutional functions under any circumstances. These programs are critical to our mission, and they are a permanent, integral part of the Secretary's ongoing operation.

MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING CURRENT AND HISTORIC LEGISLATIVE, FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

LEGISLATIVE OFFICES

The Legislative Department of the Office of the Secretary of the Senate provides the support essential to Senators to perform their daily chamber activities as well as the constitutional responsibilities of the Senate. The department consists of eight offices—the Bill Clerk, Captioning Services, Daily Digest, Enrolling Clerk, Executive Clerk, Journal Clerk, Legislative Clerk, and the Official Reporters of Debates—all supervised by the Secretary through the Legislative Clerk. The Parliamentarian's office is also within the Legislative Department of the Secretary of the Senate.

Each of the nine offices within the Legislative Department is supervised by experienced veterans of the Secretary's office. The average length of service of legislative supervisors is 20 years. There is not one supervisor with less than 14 years of service. The experience of these senior professional staff is a great asset for the Senate. As in previous years and in order to ensure continued well-rounded expertise, the legislative team has cross-trained extensively among their specialties.

1. BILL CLERK

The Office of the Bill Clerk collects and records data on the legislative activity of the Senate, which becomes the historical record of official Senate business. The Bill Clerk's Office keeps this information in its handwritten files and ledgers and also enters it into the Senate's automated retrieval system so that it is available to all House and Senate offices via the Legislative Information System (LIS). The Bill Clerk records actions of the Senate with regard to bills, resolutions, reports, amendments, cosponsors, public law numbers, and recorded votes. The Bill Clerk is responsible for preparing for print all measures introduced, received, submitted, and reported in the Senate. The Bill Clerk also assigns numbers to all Senate bills and resolutions. All the information received in this office comes directly from the Senate floor in written form within moments of the action involved. As a result, the Bill Clerk's Office is generally regarded as the most timely and most accurate source of legislative information.

The Bill Clerk's Office continues to provide Senate offices and the public information on Senate legislative status with a high degree of accuracy and speed, both through the Senate LIS system (when questions on status concern legislation from prior days) and over the phone (mostly for same-day information).

Legislative Activity

The Bill Clerk's Office processed less legislation and fewer roll call votes during the second session of the108th Congress compared to the first session of the 108th Congress. Below is a comparative summary of the second sessions of the 107th and the 108th congresses, as well as a comparative summary of both sessions of the 107th and the 108th congresses:

	107th Congress, 2nd Session	108th Congress, 2nd Session
Senate Bills	1,298	1,032
Senate Joint Resolutions	23	16
Senate Concurrent Resolutions	67	66
Senate Resolutions	170	204
Amendments Submitted	2,287	1,857
House Bills	298	322
House Joint Resolutions	12	12
House Concurrent Resolutions	84	87
Measures Reported	406	317
Written Reports	219	208
Total Legislation	4,864	4,121
Roll Call Votes	253	216

For comparative purposes, here is a final cumulative summary of both sessions of the 107th and the 108th congresses:

	107th Congress	108th Congress
Senate Bills	3,181	3,035
Senate Joint Resolutions	53	42
Senate Concurrent Resolutions	160	152
Senate Resolutions	368	487
Amendments Submitted	4,984	4,088
House Bills	562	604
House Joint Resolutions	29	32
House Concurrent Resolutions	175	165
Measures Reported	653	659
Written Reports	351	428
Total Legislation	10,516	9,692
Roll Call Votes	633	675

Assistance from the Government Printing Office (GPO)

The Bill Clerk's office maintains a good working relationship with the Government Printing Office with a common goal to provide the best service possible to meet the needs of the Senate. Toward this end, the Government Printing Office continues to respond in a timely manner to the Secretary's request through the Bill Clerk's office for the printing of bills and reports, including the printing of priority matters for the Senate Chamber. Specifically, the Secretary requested, through the Bill Clerk, that GPO reprint (star print) roughly 40 measures during the course of the Congress, and that GPO expedite the printing of slightly more than one hundred measures for consideration by the Senate.

Projects

Amendment Tracking System (ATS).—Rules Committee staff approached our office with the task of scanning submitted amendments onto the Amendment Tracking System on LIS. The Rules Committee has identified a need for Senate staff, to have all amendments submitted in the Senate made available to them online shortly after being submitted, especially during cloture. The Rules Committee also requested that the Secretary through the Bill Clerk assess the feasibility of lifting the page limitation for scanning amendments onto the ATS Indexer. In response, the Bill Clerk contacted the Technology Development division of the Sergeant at Arms office to outline the technical requirements needed to implement such a request. A draft has now been completed. Once the final version is delivered, the Secretary through the Bill Clerk, in consultation with the Legislative Clerk, will ascertain the legislative requirements needed in order for the staff to implement this request. The system must be designed and implemented without sacrificing critical services to the functioning of the Senate Chamber, and specifically the amendment process.

Electronic Ledger System.—Shortly after the September 2001 attacks and the subsequent anthrax attacks in the Capitol complex, the Bill Clerk identified the need to have a electronic version of the official Senate ledgers in order to ensure the integrity of the information recorded in the ledgers. The electronic version will be portable for use during possible emergency scenarios. At the clerk's request, the Technology Development division of the Sergeant at Arms is working to develop two separate functions of this electronic ledger system. One is an electronic data entry system which will mimic the layout of the current Senate ledgers printed by the Government Printing Office; the other is a search function. Both of these programs will be housed on a separate server to maintain the integrity of the ledger data. The electronic ledger system is currently under development. To further advance the project, the ELS project team at Postal Square has spent much time updating and converting data.

2. OFFICE OF CAPTIONING SERVICES

The Office of Captioning Services provides realtime captioning of Senate floor proceedings for the deaf and hard-of-hearing and unofficial electronic transcripts of Senate floor proceedings to Senate offices via the Senate Intranet.

Accuracy remains the watchword of Captioning Services. Overall caption quality is monitored through translation data reports, monitoring the captions in realtime and reviewing the caption files on the Senate Intranet.

A cooperative effort between the Senate Rules Committee, the Judiciary Committee, the Sergeant at Arms and the Secretary of the Senate in fiscal year 2002 to develop a Pilot Project to realtime caption Senate Committee Hearings resulted in a Judiciary Committee Captioning Committee Pilot Project.

Voice recognition technology continues to improve and the Office of Captioning Services is on the cutting edge of testing and evaluating these products as they evolve. The Pilot Project to realtime caption Judiciary Committee hearings employed the newest hardware and software developed for voice recognition captioning.

During fiscal year 2005, considerable energy was expended to update the hardware, software and documentation in our COOP flyway kit to enhance the ability to successfully caption from a remote location.

The primary objective for fiscal year 2006 is to plan for the procurement and installation of equipment and relocation of the Office of Captioning Services to the Capitol Visitors Center.

3. DAILY DIGEST

The Senate Daily Digest serves seven principal functions:

—To render a brief, concise and easy-to-read accounting of all official actions taken by the Senate in the Congressional Record section known as the Daily Digest.

—To compile an accounting of all meetings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees and committees of conference.

—To enter all Senate and Joint committee scheduling data into the Senate's web-based scheduling application system. Committee scheduling information is also prepared for publication in the Daily Digest in three formats: Day-Ahead Schedule; Congressional Program for the Week Ahead; and the extended schedule which actually appears in the Extensions of Remarks section of the Congressional Record.

—To enter into the Senate's Legislative Information System all official actions taken by Senate committees on legislation, nominations, and treaties.

—To publish in the Daily Digest a listing of all legislation which has become public law.

—To publish on the first legislative day of each month in the Daily Digest a "Resume of Congressional Activity" which includes all Congressional statistical information, including days and time in session; measures introduced, reported and passed; and roll call votes.

—To assist the House Daily Digest Editor in the preparation at the end of each session of Congress a history of public bills enacted into law and a final resume of congressional statistical activity.

Committee Activity

Senate committees held a total of 787 meetings during the second session, as contrasted with 930 meetings during the second session, of the 107th Congress.

As more specifically defined above, all hearings and business meetings (including joint meetings and conferences) are scheduled through the Office of the Senate Daily Digest and are published in the Congressional Record and entered in the web-based applications system (Legislative Information System). Meeting outcomes are also published by the Daily Digest in the Congressional Record each day.

Chamber Activity

The Senate was in session a total of 133 days, for a total of 1,031 hours and 31 minutes. There was one live quorum call and 216 recorded votes. (A 20-Year Comparison of Senate Legislative Activity follows).

20-YEAR COMPARISON OF SENATE LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Senate Convened	1/3	1/21	1/6	1/25	1/3	1/23	1/3	1/3	1/5	1/25
Senate Adjourned	12/20	10/18	12/22	10/21	11/21	10/28	1/3/92	10/9	11/26	12/01
Days in Session	170	143	170	137	136	138	158	129	153	138
Hours in Session	1,252′31″	1,278′15″	1,214′52″	1,126′48″	1,003′19″	1,250′14″	1,200′44″	1,091′09″	1,269′41″	1,243′33″
Average Hours per Day	7.4	8.9	7.1	8.2	7.4	9.1	7.6	8.5	8.3	9.0
Total Measures Passed	583	747	616	814	605	716	626	651	473	465
Roll Call Votes	381	359	420	379	312	326	280	270	395	329
Quorum Calls	20	16	36	26	11	3	3	5	2	6
Public Laws	240	424	240	473	240	244	243	347	210	255
Treaties Ratified	6	12	3	15	9	15	15	32	20	8
Nominations Confirmed	55,918	39,893	46,404	42,317	45,585	42,493	45,369	30,619	38,676	37,446
Average Voting Attendance	94.64	95.72	94.03	91.58	98.0	97.47	97.16	95.4	97.6	97.02
Sessions Convened Before 12 Noon	119	117	131	120	95	116	126	112	128	120
Sessions Convened at 12 Noon	38	25	12	12	14	4	9	......	6	9
Sessions Convened after 12 Noon	13	1	25	5	27	17	23	10	15	17
Sessions Continued after 6 p.m	104	92	97	37	88	100	102	91	100	100
Sessions Continued after 12 Midnight	7	15	6	7	9	13	6	4	9	7
Saturday Sessions	3	2	3	......	1	3	2	2	2	3
Sunday Sessions	1	......	1	......	......	2	......	......	......	......

20-YEAR COMPARISON OF SENATE LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY—Continued

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Senate Convened	1/4	1/3	1/3	1/27	1/6	1/24	1/3	1/23	1/7	1/20
Senate Adjourned	1/3/96	10/4	11/13	10/21	11/19	12/15	12/20	11/20	12/9	12/8
Days in Session	211	132	153	143	162	141	173	149	167	133
Hours in Session	1,839′10″	1,036′45″	1,093′07″	1,095′05″	1,183′57″	1,017′51″	1,236′15″	1,042′23″	1,454′05″	1,031′31″
Average Hours per Day	8.7	7.8	7.1	7.7	7.3	7.2	7.1	7.0	8.7	7.7
Total Measures Passed	346	476	386	506	549	696	425	523	590	663
Roll Call Votes	613	306	298	314	374	298	380	253	459	216
Quorum Calls	3	2	6	4	7	6	3	2	3	1
Public Laws	88	245	153	241	170	410	136	241	198	300
Treaties Ratified	10	28	15	53	13	39	3	17	11	15
Nominations Confirmed	40,535	33,176	25,576	20,302	22,468	22,512	25,091	23,633	21,580	24,420
Average Voting Attendance	98.07	98.22	98.68	97.47	98.02	96.99	98.29	96.36	96.07	95.54

20-YEAR COMPARISON OF SENATE LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY—Continued—Continued

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Sessions Convened Before 12 Noon	184	113	115	109	118	107	140	119	133	104
Sessions Convened at 12 Noon	2	15	12	31	17	25	10	12	4	9
Sessions Convened after 12 Noon	12	7	7	2	19	24	21	23	23	21
Sessions Continued after 6 p.m	158	88	96	93	113	94	108	103	134	129
Sessions Continued after 12 Midnight	3	1	......	......	......	......	2	3	8	2
Saturday Sessions	5	1	1	1	3	1	3	......	1	2
Sunday Sessions	3	......	1	......	......	1	......	......	1	1

Prepared by the Senate Daily Digest—Office of the Secretary.

Technology Updates and Government Printing Office

The Daily Digest continues to send the complete publication at the end of each day to the Government Printing Office electronically. The Editor, Assistant Editor, and Committee Scheduling Coordinator function solely within the framework of adaptability to preparing Digest copy on computers, storing and sharing information, permitting prompt editing, and the final transfer to floppy disc. The Digest continues the practice of sending a disc along with a duplicate hard copy to GPO, even though GPO receives the Digest copy by electronic transfer long before hand delivery is completed adding to the timeliness of publishing the Congressional Record. The Digest office continues to feel comfortable with this procedure, both to allow the Digest Editor to physically view what is being transmitted to GPO, and to allow GPO staff to have a comparable final product to cross reference.

The Daily Digest continues the practice of discussing with the Government Printing Office problems encountered with the printing of the Digest, and are pleased to report that with the onset of electronic transfer of the Digest copy, occurrences of editing corrections or transcript errors are infrequent.

The Digest office continues to work closely with Senate computer staff to refine the LIS/DMS system, including further refinements to the Senate Committee Scheduling application which will improve the data entry process. The committee scheduling application was developed back in 1999 as a server-based web-enabled application that is browser accessible to all Senate offices on Capitol Hill. It was designed to replace the committee scheduling functions and reports that were supported by the mainframe-based Senate Legis System.

Office Summary

The Daily Digest consults on a daily basis with the Senate Parliamentarians, Legislative, Executive, Journal, and Bill Clerks, the Official Reporters of Debates, as well as the staffs of the Policy Committees and other committee staffs, and is grateful for the continued support from these offices.

4. ENROLLING CLERK

The Enrolling Clerk prepares, proofreads, corrects and prints all legislation passed by the Senate prior to its transmittal to the House of Representatives, the White House, the National Archives, the Secretary or State and/or the United States Claims Court.

In 2004, 86 enrolled bills (transmitted to the President) and 14 concurrent resolutions (transmitted to Archives) were prepared, proofread, corrected and printed on parchment.

A total of 673 additional pieces of legislation in one form or another were passed or agreed to by the Senate, requiring processing by the Enrolling Clerk.

5. EXECUTIVE CLERK

The Executive Clerk prepares an accurate record of actions taken by the Senate during executive sessions (proceedings on nominations and treaties) which is published as the Executive Journal at the end of each session of Congress. The Executive Clerk also prepares daily the Executive Calendar as well as all nomination and treaty resolutions for transmittal to the President. Additionally, the Executive Clerk's office processes all executive communications, presidential messages and petitions and memorials.

Nominations

During the second session of the 108th Congress, there were 340 nomination messages sent to the Senate by the President, transmitting 24,420 nominations to positions requiring Senate confirmation and 26 messages withdrawing nominations previously sent to the Senate. Of the total nominations transmitted, 336 were for civilian positions other than lists in the Foreign Service, Coast Guard, NOAA, and Public Health Service. In addition, there were 4,077 nominees in the "civilian list" categories named above. Military nominations received this session totaled 20,003 (6,077—Air Force, 5,324—Army, 7,375—Navy and 1,227—Marine Corps). The Senate confirmed 27,047 nominations this session. Pursuant to the provisions of paragraph six of Senate Rule XXXI, 4,129 nominations were returned to the President during the second session of the 108th Congress.

Treaties

There were 14 treaties transmitted to the Senate by the President during the second session of the 108th Congress for its advice and consent to ratification, which were ordered printed as treaty documents for the use of the Senate (Treaty Doc. 108–15 through 108–28). The Senate gave its advice and consent to 18 treaties with various conditions, declarations, understandings and provisos to the resolutions of advice and consent to ratification.

Executive Reports and Roll Call Votes

There were 14 executive reports relating to treaties ordered printed for the use of the Senate during the second session of the 108th Congress (Executive Report 108–9 through 108–14). The Senate conducted 32 roll call votes in executive session, all on or in relation to nominations.

Executive Communications

For the second session of the 108th Congress, 4,932 executive communications, 212 petitions and memorials and 39 Presidential messages were received and processed.

Legislative Information System (LIS) Update

The staff consulted with the Senate Computer Center during the year concerning the ongoing improvements to the LIS concerning the processing of nominations, treaties, executive communications, presidential messages and petitions and memorials.

The Senate Computer Center developed a new program for the Executive Calendar that has proved more efficient and error free. The SAA computer programming and systems design staff have were very helpful in consulting with our office concerning our requirements. The SAA also has underway a much needed redesign of a program for creating and publishing the Executive Journal.

6. JOURNAL CLERK

The Journal Clerk takes notes of the daily legislative proceedings of the Senate in the "Minute Book" and prepares a history of bills and resolutions for the printed Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate, or Senate Journal, as required by Article I, Section V of the Constitution. The Senate Journal is published each calendar year. In 2004, the Journal Clerk completed the production of the 1,146 page Senate Journal for 2003.

The Journal staff each take 90 minute turns at the rostrum in the Senate Chamber, noting by hand for inclusion in the Minute Book (i) all orders (entered into by the Senate through unanimous consent agreements), (ii) legislative messages received from the President of the United States, (iii) messages from the House of Representatives, (iv) legislative actions as taken by the Senate (including motions made by Senators, points of order raised, and roll call votes taken), (v) amendments submitted and proposed for consideration, (vi) bills and joint resolutions introduced, and (vii) concurrent and Senate resolutions as submitted. These notes of the proceedings are then compiled in electronic form for publication.

After extensive testing, the LIS Senate Journal Authoring System was completed in early 2004. The Journal staff utilized this system through all phases of production for the first time to successfully compile the 2004 Journal which was sent to the Government Printing Office for printing in mid-March.

7. LEGISLATIVE CLERK

The Legislative Department provides support essential to Senators in carrying out their daily chamber activities as well as the constitutional responsibilities of the Senate. The Legislative Clerk sits at the Secretary's desk in the Senate Chamber and reads aloud bills, amendments, the Senate Journal, Presidential messages, and other such materials when so directed by the Presiding Officer of the Senate. The Legislative Clerk calls the roll of members to establish the presence of a quorum and to record and tally all yea and nay votes. This office prepares the Senate Calendar of Business, published each day that the Senate is in session, and prepares additional publications relating to Senate class membership and committee and subcommittee assignments. The Legislative Clerk maintains the official copy of all measures pending before the Senate and must incorporate into those measures any amendments that are agreed to. This office retains custody of official messages received from the House of Representatives and conference reports awaiting action by the Senate. This office is responsible for verifying the accuracy of information entered into the LIS system by the various offices of the Secretary.

Additionally, the Legislative Clerk acts as supervisor for the Legislative Department providing a single line of communication to the Assistant Secretary and Secretary, and is responsible for overall coordination, supervision, scheduling, and cross training.

Summary of Activity

The second session of the 108th Congress completed its legislative business and adjourned sine die on December 8, 2004. During 2004, the Senate was in session 133 days and conducted 216 roll call votes. There were 317 measures reported from committees, 663 total measures passed, and there were 296 items remaining on the Calendar at the time of adjournment. In addition, there were 1,857 amendments processed.

Cross-Training

Recognizing the importance of planning for the continuity of Senate business, under both normal and possibly extenuating circumstances, cross-training is strongly emphasized among the Secretary's legislative staff. To ensure additional staff are trained to perform the basic floor responsibilities of the Legislative Clerk, as well as the various other floor-related responsibilities of the Secretary, approximately half of the legislative staff are currently involved or have recently been involved in cross-training.

Legislative Information System (LIS) Enhancement

In an effort to monitor and improve the Legislative Information System (LIS), the Legislative Clerk acts as the liaison between legislative clerks and technical operations staff of the Sergeant at Arms by scheduling and conducting meetings when necessary. Also, the Legislative Clerk reviews, prioritizes, and forwards change requests from the clerks to the technical operations staff. Over the past year, 45 change requests submitted by the clerks to improve the system have been implemented.

8. OFFICIAL REPORTERS OF DEBATES

The Official Reporters of Debates prepare and edit for publication in the Congressional Record a substantially verbatim report of the proceedings of the Senate, and serve as liaison for all Senate personnel on matters relating to the content of the Record. The transcript of proceedings, submitted statements and legislation are transmitted in hard copy and electronically throughout the day to the Government Printing Office (GPO).

The office works diligently to assure that the electronic submissions to GPO are timely and efficient. The Official Reporters encourage offices to make submissions to the Record by electronic means, which results in both a tremendous cost saving to the Senate and minimizes keyboard errors.

To further efficiency, the office provides guidelines on format for the Congressional Record. These provide a helpful tool to assure an accurate and timely printing of each day's Record.

The office updated its ProCat transcription software at the beginning of last year. With the help of the Information Systems department, the office was able to make the necessary adjustments to accomplish the latest software update.

9. PARLIAMENTARIAN

The Parliamentarian's Office continues its performance of normal legislative duties. These include advising the Chair, Senators and their staff, as well as committee staff, House members and their staffs, administration officials, the media and members of the general public, on all matters requiring an interpretation of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the precedents of the Senate, unanimous consent agreements, as well as provisions of public law affecting the proceedings of the Senate.

The Parliamentarians work in close cooperation with the Senate leadership and their floor staffs to coordinate all of the business on the Senate floor. The Parliamentarian or one of his assistants is always present on the Senate floor when the Senate is in session, standing ready to assist the Presiding Officer in his or her official duties, as well as to assist any other Senator on procedural matters. The Parliamentarians work closely with the staff of the Vice President of the United States and the Vice President himself whenever he performs his duties as President of the Senate.

The Parliamentarians monitor all proceedings on the floor of the Senate, advise the Presiding Officer on the competing rights of the Senators on the floor, and advise all Senators as to what is appropriate in debate. The Parliamentarians keep track of the amendments offered to the legislation pending on the Senate floor, and monitor them for points of order. In this respect, the Parliamentarians reviewed more than 1,000 amendments during 2004 to determine if they met various procedural requirements, such as germaneness. The Parliamentarians also reviewed thousands of pages of conference reports to determine what provisions could appropriately be included therein.

The Office of the Parliamentarian is responsible for the referral to the appropriate committees of all legislation introduced in the Senate, all legislation received from the House, as well as all communications received from the executive branch, state and local governments, and private citizens. In order to perform this responsibility, the Parliamentarians do extensive legal and legislative research. During 2004, the Parliamentarian and his assistants referred 1,271 measures and 5,183 communications to the appropriate Senate committees. The office worked extensively with Senators and their staffs to advise them of the jurisdictional consequences of particular drafts of legislation, and evaluated the jurisdictional effect of proposed modifications in drafting. The office continues to address the jurisdictional questions posed by the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, which now has responsibility for hundreds of issues previously in the jurisdiction of other Senate committees, by the adoption of S. Res. 445 reorganizing intelligence and homeland security jurisdiction in the Senate, and by the enactment of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. The Parliamentarians have made dozens of decisions about the committee referrals of nominations for new positions created in Homeland Security, nominations for positions which existed before the department was created but whose responsibilities have changed, and hundreds of legislative proposals concerning the department's responsibilities.

The staff of the Parliamentarian's Office is also frequently called on to analyze and advise Senators on a great number of issues arising under the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. The decisions made by the Parliamentarians on these matters were a significant factor in the consideration of the President's budgetary proposals, and the overall Congressional approach to its budget.

Additionally, in the last four years, rules relating to legislation on appropriations bills, and the scope of conference reports on all bills were reinstated. This has opened up hundreds of Senate amendments to renewed scrutiny by the Parliamentarians, and has meant that the Parliamentarians now have the responsibility of potentially reviewing every provision of every conference report considered by both houses of Congress.

The Parliamentarians have taken the lead in the Senate in analyzing the need for emergency procedural authorities of Congress generally, and the Senate in particular. The Parliamentarians took the initiative that led to the adoption of S. Res. 296 on February 3, 2004, which granted certain emergency authorities to enable the Senate leadership to alter the Senate's schedule in certain emergency situations.

In 2004, as in all election years, the Parliamentarians received all of the certificates of election of Senators elected or reelected to the Senate, and reviewed them for sufficiency and accuracy, returning those that were defective and reviewing their replacements. Also in 2004, as in all Presidential election years, the Parliamentarians worked with other professional staff of the Secretary of the Senate and our House counterparts to prepare for the orderly conduct of the joint session of Congress to count the electoral ballots for President and Vice President. The Parliamentarians reviewed the electoral ballots for President and Vice President sent by all the states and the District of Columbia to the Vice President, and held several briefings with the Vice President and his staff and the House Parliamentarians regarding the Vice President's routine duties while presiding over the joint session of Congress to count the electoral ballots.

FINANCIAL OPERATIONS: DISBURSING OFFICE

Disbursing Office Organization

The mission of the Senate Disbursing Office is to provide efficient and effective central financial and human resource data management, information and advice to the distributed, individually managed offices, and to Members and employees of the United States Senate. To accomplish this mission, the Senate Disbursing Office manages the collection of information from the distributed accounting locations in the Senate to formulate and consolidate the agency level budget, disburse the payroll, pay the Senate's bills, prepare auditable financial statements, and provide appropriate counseling and advice. The Senate Disbursing Office collects information from Members and employees that is necessary to maintain and administer the retirement, health insurance, life insurance, and other central human resource programs. The DO provides responsive, personal attention to Members and employees on a non-biased and confidential basis. The Senate Disbursing Office also manages the distribution of central financial and human resource information to the individual Member Offices, Committees, and Administrative and Leadership offices in the Senate while maintaining the appropriate control of information for the protection of individual Members and Senate employees.

To support the mission of the Senate Disbursing Office, the organization is structured in a manner that is intended to enhance its ability to provide quality work, maintain a high level of customer service, promote good internal controls, efficiency and teamwork, and provide for the appropriate levels of supervision and management. The long-term financial needs of the Senate are best served by an organization staffed with highly trained professionals who possess a high degree of institutional knowledge, sound judgement, and interpersonal skills that reflect the unique nature of the United States Senate.

Deputy for Benefits and Financial Services

The primary responsibility of this position is to provide expertise on Federal retirement and benefits, payroll, and front office processes. Coordination of the interaction between the Financial Services, Employee Benefits, and Payroll sections is also a major responsibility of the position. Planning and project management of new computer systems and programs is also a key function. Ensuring that job processes are efficient and up to date, modifying computer support systems, implementing regulatory and legislated changes, and designing and producing up to date forms for use in all three sections are additional areas of responsibility.

In November 2003, it was determined that the new IBM Mainframe operating system being released would not support our payroll system. An accelerated system implementation was required, so instead of the normal eighteen-month window, this implementation had to be completed in only eight months. A team to address the situation was composed of Disbursing Office staff with the Deputy as the project lead, key Sergeant at Arms personnel and outside contractors. The system was successfully tested and implemented as planned on August 1, 2004. The payroll system was brought up to web accessible status, a myriad of small problems was corrected, and a number of new functions were added to enable payroll to more efficiently handle the Senate's needs.

In January, final touches on the Document Imaging System were completed and the first documents, the 2003 W–2s, were loaded into it. The Front Office, Employee Benefits, Payroll and Administrative sections' personnel were trained in the use of the system and the old procedure for the reissue of W–2 copies was discontinued. During the next few months, copies of the W–2s going as far back as 1998 were added to the files.

In March, many of the forms and procedures for the Student Loan Repayment Program were examined and revised to increase accuracy and efficiency of processing.

In September, the monthly payroll data provided to the Accounting Section was converted to e-format for transmittal to the Office of Personnel Management.

In November, reports and projections for Agency contributions to be uploaded into the Accounting system were addressed. Requirements were detailed, and during the month the payroll upload portion was completed and the Accounting group is now working on their portion of the project.

Front Counter—Administrative and Financial Services

The Front Counter is the main service area of all general Senate business and financial activity. The Front Counter maintains the Senate's internal accountability of funds used in daily operations. Reconciliation of such funds is executed on a daily basis. The Front Counter provides training to newly authorized payroll contacts along with continuing guidance to all contacts in the execution of business operations. It is the receiving point for most incoming expense vouchers, payroll actions, and employee benefits related forms, and is the initial verification point to ensure that paperwork received in the Disbursing Office conforms to all applicable Senate rules, regulations, and statutes. The Front Counter is the first line of service provided to Senate Members, Officers, and employees. All new Senate employees (permanent and temporary) who will work in the Capitol Hill Senate offices are administered the required oath of office and personnel affidavit and provided verbal and written detailed information regarding their pay and benefits. Authorization is certified to new and state employees for issuance of their Senate identification card. Advances are issued to Senate staff authorized for an advance for official Senate travel. Cash and check advances are entered and reconciled in the Funds Advance Tracking System (FATS). Repayment of travel advances is executed after processing of certified expenses is complete. Travelers' checks are available on a non-profit basis to assist the traveler. Numerous inquiries are handled daily, ranging from pay, benefits, taxes, voucher processing, reporting, laws, and Senate regulations, and must always be answered accurately and fully to provide the highest degree of customer service. Cash and checks received from Senate entities as part of their daily business are handled through the Front Counter and become part of the Senate's accountability of federally appropriated funds and are then processed through the Senate's general ledger system.

General Activities

The Front Counter processed approximately 2,100 cash advances, totaling approximately $1.2 million and initialized 700 check/direct deposit advances, totaling approximately $780,000.

Received and processed more than 27,000 checks, totaling over $3,450,000. Administered Oath and Personnel Affidavits to more than 3,200 new Senate staff and advised them of their benefits.

Maintained brochures for 10 Federal health carriers and distributed approximately 4,000 brochures to new and existing staff during the annual FEHB Open Season.

Provided 36 training sessions to new Office Managers.

The Front Office operations continued its daily reconciliation of operations without any auditable variation; continued to provide training and guidance to new Office Managers and business contacts; and spearheaded the advance processing of paperwork of the nine incoming offices resulting from the November elections. A major emphasis was placed on assisting employees in maximizing their Thrift Savings Plan contributions and making them aware of the Thrift Savings Plan catch up program when applicable. Front Office operations continued to provide the Senate community with prompt, courteous, and informative advice regarding Disbursing operations.

Payroll Section

The Payroll Section maintains the Human Resources Management System and is responsible for the following: processing, verifying, and warehousing all payroll information submitted to the Disbursing Office by Senators for their personal staff, by Chairmen for their committee staff, and by other elected officials for their staff; issuing salary payments to the above employees; rectifying returns of student loan allowance payments, jointly maintaining the Automated Clearing House (ACH) FEDLINE facilities with the Accounts Payable Section for the normal transmittal of payroll deposits to the Federal Reserve; distributing the appropriate payroll expenditure and allowance reports to the individual offices; issuing the proper withholding and agency contributions reports to the Accounting Department; and transmitting the proper Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) information to the National Finance Center (NFC), while maintaining earnings records for distribution to the Social Security Administration, and maintaining employees' taxable earnings records for W–2 statements, prepared by this section. The Payroll Section is also responsible for the payroll expenditure data portion of the Report of the Secretary of the Senate.

General Activities

The Payroll Section processed a January 1, 2004 cost of living increase of 2.12 percent. This was a preliminary cost of living increase based on the President's recommended plan at the time. The payroll section later processed a second cost of living increase on March 1, 2004 when Congress set the final cost of living rate of 4.42 percent. Payroll was able to offer the offices several scenarios to retroactively implement the COLA.

The Payroll Section maintained the normal schedule of processing TSP open season forms.

Employees took full advantage of the increase of TSP deductions making the most of the new 14 percent/$13,000.00 maximum. For those employees over 50 years of age the TSP catch-up programs provided them an opportunity to make additional contributions in excess of the standard program.

January 2004 represented the first full year for the processing of Flexible Spending Accounts and Long Term Care Accounts. The section has found that the files received for each of the above items were challenging as the third party vendors had not done business with the Federal Government in the past and were unfamiliar with standard processing procedures.

The section helped the SAA's Information Technology staff upgrade the Payroll/Personal System from 31 bit technology to 64 bit technology. This upgrade enabled better security and additional Web based access to Disbursing Office Data. Each member of the section assisted in the testing and evaluation of the new product. The upgraded system was successfully put into production August 1, 2004.

The elections of 2004 focused the efforts of the Payroll Section on preparing the system for the opening of incoming members' offices and the closing of departing members' offices.

The Payroll Section participated in the December disaster recovery testing at the Alternate Computer Facility (ACF). Members of the section were able to access and process data to the computer at ACF from several locations and various computer connections. Finally, set-up of the ACH Fedline II system was completed. It established proper connections with the Federal Reserve to ensure that processed payrolls and vouchers could be transmitted from the ACF.

Employee Benefits Section

The primary responsibilities of the Employee Benefits Section (EBS) are administration of health insurance, life insurance and all retirement programs for Members and employees of the Senate. This includes counseling, processing of paperwork, research, dissemination of information and interpretation of retirement and benefits laws and regulations. In addition, the sectional work includes research and verification of all prior federal service and prior Senate service for new and returning appointees. EBS provides this information for payroll input and once Official Personnel Folders and Transcripts of Service are received, verifies the accuracy of the information provided and reconciles as necessary. Transcripts of Service including all official retirement and benefits documentation are provided to other federal agencies when Senate Members and staffers are hired elsewhere in the government. EBS processes employment verifications for loans, the Bar Exam, the FBI, OPM, and DOD, among others. Unemployment claim forms are completed, and employees are counseled on their eligibility. Department of Labor billings for unemployment compensation paid to Senate employees are reviewed in EBS and submitted by voucher to the Accounting Section for payment. Designations of Beneficiary for FEGLI, CSRS, FERS, and unpaid compensation are filed and checked by EBS.

In 2004 OPM announced that there would be a FEGLI Open Season for employees to elect new or additional life insurance coverage. EBS drafted Open Season informational flyers and notified employees electronically and via mail outs. An innovative step taken with this mail out was to have FEGLI send direct notification to Senate employees, which provided more timely notice and saved mailing expenses to the Senate. Numerous employees were counseled and approximately 350 Senate employees made FEGLI changes during the Open Season.

In 2003 as part of our COOP goals, EBS worked with the Deputy for Benefits and Financial Services, the Senate Computer Center and other DO staff to outline the needs and parameters required for development and implementation of a document imaging system for use in electronically reproducing employee personnel folders. During 2004 EBS redesigned the file room to accommodate a new employee hired to assist with the document scanning as well as the document imaging hardware. In mid-2004 implementation of the document imaging system was achieved. This required extensive training and modification of many procedures and the forms-flow from EBS and Payroll to the file room as well as the flow of forms within the file room. Modification of procedures will continue as warranted. This system will allow computer-based access to new employee personnel folders and documents as well as the ability to access them from an off-site facility. To complete our COOP readiness with respect to employee personnel folder access, one future goal is to contract out the scanning of all "prior" employee personnel folder documents that are housed in the DO file room.

Shortly before the onset of the FEHB Open Season, OPM announced that it would offer a new type of health plan to employees: High Deductible Health Plans, which incorporate a Health Savings Account (HSA) and a Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA). As these plans are vastly different than those previously offered in the FEHB program, EBS worked diligently to become educated in all aspects of these plans and to understand the similarities and differences between HSAs, FSAs and HRAs. Many employees were counseled on the aspects of these new plans.

The annual FEHB Open Season was held and approximately 500 employees changed plans. These changes were processed and reported to carriers in record time. This year we were again able to offer an exciting tool for Senate employees. The Checkbook on-line Guide to Health Plans was made available to research and compare FEHB plans. This tool will remain available to staff throughout the year. As awareness and understanding of this valuable tool has increased, feedback is positive. Once again, the Disbursing Office hosted an FEHB Open Season Health Fair, which was attended by about 700 employees and as an additional service, it was open to all other federal employees on the Hill, including House, Capitol Police, Architect of the Capitol and Senate Restaurant employees. In addition to having health plan representatives available to provide information and answer questions, representatives from FSA Feds and Long Term Care Insurance were in attendance as well.

While retirement case processing was about average for the year, retirement planning and counseling was brisk in the second half of 2004 due to the impending retirement of 8 Senators, and the dissolution of their staffs and the potential changes to committee staffs. This resulted in the counseling of hundreds of employees including extensive research and calculation of Statements of Tentative Retirement Computations. Approximately 95 retirement cases were processed (including 8 death cases).

Seminars were held for outgoing Members' staffs, as well as committees facing potential reorganization. Information disseminated spanned retirement, Thrift Savings Plan, health and life insurance, and unemployment compensation. Due to the large post-election turnover, EBS also hosted a seminar with the D.C. Office of Employment Services for outgoing staff who wished to apply for unemployment compensation. This opportunity for staff was well received.

There was a great deal of turnover and rehire in 2004, as employees left staff to work on campaigns and then returned to the Senate after the elections. This caused an increase in appointments to be researched and processed, retirement records to be closed out, termination packages of benefits information to be compiled and mailed out, and health insurance registrations to be processed. Transcripts of service for employees going to other federal agencies, and other tasks associated with employees changing jobs remained constant this year. These required prior employment research and verification, new FEHB, FEGLI, CSRS, FERS and TSP enrollments, and the associated requests for backup verification.

The government-wide CLER program for health insurance enrollment reconciliation, now in its third year, has finally become a usable and effective tool. Through much diligence and effective problem solving, EBS was able to assist with the improvements to this program.

EBS continues to upgrade the information available on the DO Webster site and has added more downloadable forms. Newer video technologies and links are routinely used. In addition, EBS has been developing many computer-based forms and calculators for use in providing benefits information and estimates.

Two detailed Power Point retirement seminars on CSRS and FERS were updated and conducted for interested Senate staff. The seminars were well attended and well received.

Additionally EBS staff regularly provided a panel participant for the monthly New Staff Orientation seminars and quarterly Senate Services Fairs held by the Office of Education and Training.

Interagency meetings were attended with time being spent on the FEGLI Open Season, guidance on the new FEHB plans, as well as continuing education and guidance on the FSA

Program, LTCI, and the continuing TSP program changes and enhancements.

Based on the continued operations in Iraq and the call to active duty of military reservists, the volume of Senate employees being placed in a Military Leave Without Pay (LWOP) status and subsequently returned to pay status continued to be elevated throughout 2004. Counseling and administration of their retirement and benefits was handled by EBS.

Telephone inquiries, though not specifically tracked, continued at high levels, with the EBS staff of 7 pressed to answer calls thoroughly, yet quickly enough to keep lines open.

Disbursing Office Financial Management

Headed by the Deputy for Financial Management, the mission of Disbursing Office Financial Management (DOFM) is to coordinate all central financial policies, procedures, and activities to process and pay expense vouchers within reasonable time frames, to work toward producing an auditable consolidated financial statement for the Senate and to provide professional customer service, training and confidential financial guidance to all Senate accounting locations. In addition, the Financial Management group is responsible for the compilation of the annual operating budget of the United States Senate for presentation to the Committee on Appropriations as well as for the formulation, presentation and execution of the budget for the Senate. On a semiannual basis, this group is also responsible for the compilation, validation and completion of the Report of the Secretary of the Senate. DOFM is segmented into three functional departments: Accounting, Accounts Payable, and Budget. The Accounts Payable Department is subdivided into three sections: The Audit group, the Disbursement group and the Vendor/SAVI group. The Deputy coordinates the activities of all three departments, establishes central financial policies and procedures, acts as the primary liaison to the Human Resources Administrator, and carries out the directives of the Financial Clerk and the Secretary of the Senate.

Accounting Department

During fiscal year 2004, the Accounting Department approved nearly 48,000 expense reimbursement vouchers, processed 1,300 deposits for items ranging from receipts received by the Senate operations, such as the Senate's Revolving Funds, to canceled subscription refunds from Member Offices. The number of vouchers that the Accounting Department approved decreased compared to fiscal year 2003, due to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration increasing the sanctioning authority delegated to the Financial Clerk of the Senate from $35.00 or less to $100.00 or less. General ledger maintenance also prompted the entry of thousands of adjustment entries that include the entry of all appropriation and allowance funding limitation transactions, all accounting cycle closing entries, and all non-voucher reimbursement transactions such as payroll adjustments, COLA (cost of living) budget uploads, stop payment requests, travel advances and repayments, and limited payability reimbursements.

This year the Accounting Department assisted in the validation of various system upgrades and modifications, including the testing required to implement Web Release 9.0 and the upgrade to a 64 bit mainframe operating system. During January 2004, the Accounting Department, with assistance from a contractor, Bearing Point, completed the 2003 year-end process to close and reset revenue, expense and budgetary general ledger accounts to zero. During June 2004, we successfully tested and implemented in Federal FAMIS another document purge including the archiving of Web report data for lapsed years. Further, toward the end of the fiscal year, the financial file rollover was performed to update FAMIS' tables and create the new index codes needed to accommodate data for fiscal year 2005. With the September 2004 closing and as a result of looking into ways to modernize the monthly reporting of checks written by reel tape, the Accounting Department tested and implemented (with assistance from the SAA and Bearing Point) the electronic transmission of check data to Treasury via a secure dial-up.

The Department of the Treasury's monthly financial reporting requirements includes a Statement of Accountability that details all increases and decreases to the accountability of the Secretary of the Senate, such as checks issued during the month and deposits received, as well as a detailed listing of cash on hand. Also, on a monthly basis, reported to the Department of the Treasury is the Statement of Transactions According to Appropriations, Fund and Receipt Accounts that summarizes all activity at the appropriation level of all monies disbursed by the Secretary of the Senate through the Financial Clerk of the Senate. All activity by appropriation account is reconciled with the Department of the Treasury on a monthly and annual basis. The annual reconciliation of the Treasury Combined Statement is also used in the reporting to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as part of the submission of the annual operating budget of the Senate.

This year, the Accounting Department transmitted all Federal tax payments for Federal, Social Security, and Medicare taxes withheld from payroll expenditures, as well as the Senate's matching contribution for Social Security and Medicare to the Federal Reserve Bank. The Department also performed quarterly reporting to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and annual reporting and reconciliation to the IRS and the Social Security Administration. Payments for employee withholdings for state income taxes were reported and paid on a quarterly basis to each state with applicable state income taxes withheld. Monthly reconciliations were performed with the National Finance Center regarding the employee withholdings and agency matching contributions for the Thrift Savings Plan. Starting in August, the Accounting Group began transmitting electronically all employee withholdings and agency contributions for life and health insurance, and federal retirement programs to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

In addition to Treasury's external reporting deadlines there are some internal reporting requirements such as the monthly ledger statements for all Member offices and all other offices with payroll and non-payroll expenditures. These ledger statements detail all of the financial activity for the appropriate accounting period with regard to official expenditures in detail and summary form. Monthly, it is the responsibility of the Accounting Department to review and verify the accuracy of the statements before Senate-wide distribution. During the course of this year, various table changes were made to the ledger extract to suppress lapsed fiscal years and appropriations that do not require the monthly reports.

The Accounting Department, in conjunction with the Deputy for Financial Management, continues to work closely with the Sergeant at Arms Finance Department in completing the corrective actions that were identified during the pro-forma financial statements auditability assessment. Based on the results of this exercise, 23 corrective actions were suggested including an action plan and proposed schedule to have them corrected. Some of the actions were rather simple to implement while others will take significantly longer. Of the 23 corrective actions noted, 14 have been completed and 9 are still in process. As part of this project, the Accounting Group continues to work with the SAA to complete the draft of the Senate-wide capitalization policy and is assisting with the reconciliation between FAMIS and the newly implemented asset management system, Asset Center. The Accounting Group also drafted and finalized state taxes, stop pays, EFT payments, vendor file and travel advance procedures and is in the process of updating various additional sections of the financial policies and procedures book.

As part of the financial statement initiative, steps were taken this year to procure a software package to assist with the compilation of data and automate the process of preparing the Senate-wide financial statements. The financial statement software will facilitate the preparation of closing, elimination and reclassification entries as well as provide the appropriate audit trails. The software was up and running in March 2005. As part of this initiative, the Accounting Group drafted the first internally developed set of unaudited financial statements to be used as our baseline on the testing of the newly acquired software following the guidance provided by OMB Bulletin 01–09, "Form and Content of Agency Financial Statements."

On a consulting basis, the Deputy for Financial Management assisted the Senate Gift Shop on the implementation of their new accounting system and in the completion of their reconciliations for fiscal year 2004. In addition, the Deputy was part of the task force to procure and acquire a new point-of-sale and accounting systems for the Senate Stationery Room.

Toward the end of the calendar year, the Deputy for Financial Management also participated in successful disaster recovery testing at the ACF.

Accounts Payable—Vendor/SAVI Section

Created in the fall of 2003, the Vendor/SAVI section is responsible for maintaining the accuracy and integrity of the Senate's central vendor (payee) file, for the prompt completion of new vendor file requests, and service requests related to the DO's web-based payment tracking system known as SAVI. This section also assists the IT Department with periodic testing and monitoring of the performance of the SAVI system.

Currently, there are more than 12,300 vendor records stored in the vendor file. Daily requests for new vendor addresses or updates to existing vendor information are processed within 24 hours of being received. In 2004, the A/P Department began paying vendors by electronic funds transfer (EFT). Besides updating mailing addresses, the Vendor/SAVI section facilitates the use of EFT by switching the method of payment requested by the vendor from check to EFT. Whenever a new remittance address is added to the vendor file, a standard letter is mailed to our vendors requesting tax and banking information. If a vendor responds to our letter and indicates they would like to receive EFT payments in the future, the method of payment will be changed. In August, this section coordinated a large mailing requesting EFT information from our home state office landlords and our largest commercial vendors. The mailing was a success. More than 40 percent of the targeted vendors responded to this mailing. Currently, more than 650 vendors and over half of the home state office landlords are being paid by EFT.

Service to Senate staff was significantly improved with the release of SAVI version 3.1 in late October. This version allows Senate staff to electronically create, save, and file expense reimbursement forms, track their progress, and get detailed information on payments made by DO. The most common service requests are requests for system user ids, system passwords and to reactivate accounts. Less common but more complicated are employee requests for an alternative expense payment method. An employee can choose to have their payroll set up for direct deposit but can have their vouchered expenses be reimbursed by paper check.

The Vendor/SAVI section works closely with the A/P Disbursements group resolving returned EFT issues. EFT payments are returned periodically for a variety of reasons. The reasons given have included incorrect account numbers, incorrect ABA routing numbers, and, in rare instances, a nonparticipating financial institution. Most EFT return issues are easy to resolve; however, there are some instances that result with a vendor being converted back to paper check payments. Currently, there are no unresolved return EFT issues.

The Vendor/SAVI section continues to electronically scan and store supporting documentation of vendor file requests. In the near future, this section will assist the IT Department test an automatic email notification system which will alert vendors when an EFT payment has been made and will give them information on the payment made.

This year, the Vendor/SAVI section processed over 2,800 vendor file requests, completed nearly 1,300 SAVI service requests and mailed nearly 2,000 vendor information letters.

Accounts Payable—Disbursements Department

In 2004, well over 100,000 expense claims were received and processed by the department. More than 35,000 expense checks were written and approximately 50,000 direct deposit reimbursements were transmitted. The department performed at a high level to ensure that all vendors and employees continued to receive timely and accurate payments.

After vouchers are paid, they are sorted and filed by document number. The number is an alpha-numeric code beginning with the letters D, PADV, V, IV, or CV and followed by numbers representing the fiscal year in which they were created, and another series of numbers representing, in ordinal sequence, the actual document number. Vouchers are grouped in 6-month "clusters" to accommodate their retrieval for the semi-annual Report of the Secretary of the Senate. Currently, files are maintained for the current period and three prior periods. Filing is current and accurate as few problems are encountered retrieving documents.

A major function of the Department is to prepare documents, internally classified as "adjustments." Such adjustments are varied and include the following: preparation of Foreign Travel advances and vouchers, reimbursements for expenses incurred by Senate Leadership, reissuance of items held as accounts receivable collections, reissuance of payments for which non-receipt is claimed, and various supplemental adjustments received from the Payroll Department. Such adjustments are usually disbursed by check, but an increasing number are now handled electronically via the Automated Clearing House (ACH).

The Disbursements Department is also responsible for researching returned checks as vendors request additional information relating to payment allocation. Fortunately, few checks are returned. This is a result of the use of a centralized vendor file and accurate certification of payments. There are currently no unresolved returned check issues.

The Accounts Payable Disbursements Department prepares for the distribution of the monthly ledgers to the 140 accounting locations throughout the Senate. At month's end, they are printed and delivered to Disbursing, usually to the attention of the Accounting Department, and received in Disbursements. The statements are sorted and disseminated according to special handling instructions from the office. Offices expressing no preference have their statements sent to their respective offices marked "Personal and Confidential." The main objective of this process is to have each office receive their ledger statements for the month just ended by the 10th of the following month.

A/P Disbursements also prepares the quarterly state tax returns. The dollar amounts are provided by the Accounting Department, and payment coupons are prepared for the 43 state jurisdictions. The coupons are obtained from each jurisdiction either in hard copy or on-line via the Internet. Vouchers are prepared electronically via an uploaded spreadsheet, which is used to generate check payments to the taxing authorities. Once the checks are written, letters of transmittal are prepared and mailed to the appropriate state jurisdictions and the District of Columbia.

The Department also prepares the forms required by the Department of Treasury for stop payments. Stop payments are requested by employees who have not received salary or expense reimbursements, and vendors claiming non-receipt of expense checks. During this year, the A/P Disbursement Supervisor and the Accounts Payable Manager continued using the Department of Treasury—Financial Management Service (FMS) on-line stop pay and check retrieval process known as PACER. The PACER system allows us to electronically submit stop-payment requests and provides on-line access to digital images of negotiated checks for viewing and printing. Once a check is viewed, it is printed and may be scanned. Scanned images are then forwarded to the appropriate accounting locations via email. This process has been well received by Senate offices as well as vendors. This saves time and significantly reduces reliance on the Postal System. All Accounts Payable Disbursements staff have Treasury secure ID cards and are trained in the use of PACER. Given the time and money savings, as well as the overwhelmingly positive reception, large growth in the use of PACER for check retrieval purposes is anticipated.

In October of 2004, the Accounts Payable Disbursements department began using laser checks. The tractor fed check writer system has been dismantled and a new, improved system was developed and implemented. The replacement was comprehensive in scope as new software, hardware, and new Treasury designed laser checks were introduced. The result is a user friendly, and more secure system. Accuracy has also improved as the new laser check printer font is much clearer than one from the old printer. This resulted in an immediate reduction in returned checks from the United States Postal System. It is anticipated that a new folder/inserter designed for our use will be purchased to eliminate manual hours spent on folding and hand stuffing checks into envelopes. Testing and demonstrations continue in efforts to find a machine which is both economical and efficient.

A major project which has seen tremendous progress this year is the reconciliation of the replacement check account. A team was formed consisting of the Deputy for Financial Management, Accounts Payable Manager, Chief Accountant, Accounts Payable Disbursements Supervisor and Staff Accountants. There were over 250 unresolved items covering a variety of issues. Persistent and determined revenue collection procedures have resulted in the reduction of the unresolved items and fewer than 20 remain outstanding.

The warehousing of documents has improved, and continues to evolve. Vouchers were housed at two facilities, but now all have been transferred to a single location. This location is larger, but there is need for expansion. Meetings with the Sergeant at Arms and consultants continue in an effort to provide state-of the-art warehousing. Plans call for current space requirements, anticipated space requirements, and the need for "staging" areas, telephone, copier, and fax access, climate control, and security.

Accounts Payable—Audit Department

The final section under the Accounts Payable Department is the Audit Section. The Accounts Payable Audit Section is responsible for auditing vouchers and answering questions regarding voucher preparation and the permissibility of expenses. This section provides advice and recommendations on the discretionary use of funds to the various accounting locations, identifies duplicate payments submitted by offices, monitors payments related to contracts, trains new Office Managers and Chief Clerks about Senate financial practices, trains Office Managers in the use of the Senate's Financial Management Information System, and assists in the production of the Report of the Secretary of the Senate. The Section also monitors the Fund Advance Tracking System (FATS) to ensure that advances are charged correctly, vouchers repaying such advances are entered, and balances are adjusted for reuse of the advance funds. An "aging" process is also performed to ensure that advances are repaid in the time specified by the advance travel regulations.

The Accounts Payable Audit Section, currently a group of 12, has the responsibility for the daily processing of expense claims submitted by the 140 accounting locations of the Senate. The section processed approximately 133,000 expense vouchers in fiscal year 2004. The voucher processing ranged in scope from providing interpretation of Senate rules, regulations and statute, applying the same to expense claims, monitoring of contracts and direct involvement with the Senate's central vendor file. On average, vouchers greater than $100.00 that do not have any issues or questions are received, audited, sanctioned by Rules and paid by DO within 10 business days of receipt.

During fiscal year 2004, the Chairman of the Committee on Rules and Administration increased the delegated sanctioning authority for vouchers from $35.00 or less to $100.00 or less. The workload within this group increased by almost 50 percent with the responsibility to sanction vouchers whose totals are less than or equal to $100.00. These vouchers comprise approximately 60 percent of all vouchers processed. The responsibility for sanctioning rests with the Certifying Accounts Payable Specialists and are being received, audited, and paid within 5 business days of receipt. The increase in sanctioning authority came as a direct result of passing two post-payment audits performed by the Rules Committee.

Additionally, advance documents and non-Contingent Fund vouchers are now posted in Audit. The increase in sanctioning responsibilities allowed for two staff promotions to Certifying Accounts Payable Specialist and for the creation of one additional A/P Specialist position. One staff member was promoted from the Disbursements section to the Audit section to fill this newly created position.

The reduced flow of vouchers to the Rules Committee also brought that committee into the on-line sanctioning process. Initially, four Senators' offices and the Committees comprised the pilot group. Currently, all vouchers over $100.00 are sanctioned electronically by the Rules Committee using Web FAMIS.

The Accounts Payable Audit Group provided training sessions in the use of new systems, the process for generation of expense claims, the permissibility of an expense, and participated with seminars sponsored by the Secretary of the Senate, the Sergeant at Arms, and the Library of Congress. The Section trained 15 new Administrative Managers and Chief Clerks and conducted 4 informational sessions for Senate staff through seminars sponsored by the Congressional Research Service (CRS).

The Accounts Payable group also assisted the IT department and Vendor/SAVI group in the testing and implementation of the new on-line travel and non-travel expense summary reports (ESR). The new reports are not only available on-line, but they can be imported into a corresponding Web FMIS voucher, thus facilitating the preparation and accuracy of the voucher document. Routinely, during voucher processing, vendor information is verified against invoices, and corrections made as needed. The Audit Group has been fully trained in the new travel advance system and in the use of the four new WEB inquiries to assist offices with questions. Additionally the section provided testing support for the release of Web FMIS version 9 and is scheduled to assist in the testing of Version 10 this year.

A cancellation process was established for advances in 2004. This was necessary to ensure repayment of advances systematically for canceled or postponed travel in accordance with Senate Travel Regulations. Advance procedures including cancellation were formally incorporated into the Policies and Procedures Manual. Cancellation procedures for other Web vouchers is scheduled for testing during a later system release. The A/P sections within the Policies and Procedures Manual are in the process of being updated and revised.

Budget Department

The third component of the Disbursing Office Financial Management Group is the Budget Department. The primary responsibility of the Budget Department is to compile the annual operating budget of the United States Senate for presentation to the Committee on Appropriations. The Budget Department is responsible for the preparation, issuance and distribution of the budget justification worksheets (BJW). In fiscal year 2004, the budget justification worksheets were mailed to the Senate accounting locations at the end of November, processed in December and reported the budget baseline estimates for fiscal year 2006 to OMB by mid-January, via the MAX database.

This department is also responsible for the formulation, presentation and execution of the budget for the Senate and provides a wide range of analytical, technical and advisory functions related to the budget process. The Budget Department acts as the Budget Officer for the Office of the Secretary, assisting in the preparation of testimony for the hearings before the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Rules and Administration.

During January, the Senate Budget Analyst is responsible for the preparation of 1099's and the prompt submission of forms to the IRS before the end of the month.

DISBURSING OFFICE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Financial Management Information System

The Disbursing Office Information Technology (IT) Department, provides both functional and technical assistance for all Senate Financial Management activities. Activities revolve around support of the Senate's Financial Information System (FMIS) which is used by approximately 140 Senate accounting locations (i.e., 100 Senator's offices, 20 Committees, 20 Leadership & Support offices, the Rules Committee Audit section, and the Disbursing Office). Responsibilities include: Supporting current systems; testing infrastructure changes; managing and testing new system development; planning; managing the FMIS project, including contract management; administering the Disbursing Office's Local Area Network (LAN); and coordinating the Disbursing Office's Disaster Recovery activities.

The activities associated with each of these responsibilities are described in more detail in the sections that follow. Work during 2004 was supported by the Sergeant at Arms (SAA) Technology Services staff, the Secretary's Information Technology staff, and contracts with Bearing Point.

The SAA Technology Services staff is responsible for providing the technical infrastructure, including hardware (mainframe and servers), operating system software (mainframe and servers), database software, and telecommunications; technical assistance for these components, including migration management, database administration and regular batch processing. Bearing Point is responsible, under the contract with the SAA, for operational support, and under contract with the Secretary, for application development. The DO is the "business owner" of FMIS and is responsible for making the functional decisions about FMIS. The three organizations work cooperatively.

Highlights of the year include:

—Implementation of three releases of Web FMIS including pilot implementation of an intranet-based version;

—Implementation of two releases of SAVI, including a release that allows users to create Non-travel Expense Summary Reports in addition to Travel Expense Summary Reports;
—Implementation of laser check printing which substantially improves the readability of checks by the postal service and banks;
—Support of the Rules Committee's post payment audit for the Rules Committee Audit staff whereby they can do a statistically valid sample of vouchers of $100.00 and under (an increase from $35.00 effective January 1, 2004) for which sanctioning was delegated to the Financial Clerk;
—Roll out of direct deposit payments to external vendors;
—Coordinating and participating in the FMIS portion of a disaster recovery exercise for the Alternate Computing Facility; and
—Conducting monthly classes, seminars, and demonstrations on Web FMIS.

FMIS is not a single computer system. It is composed of many subsystems that provide Senate-specific functionality. These subsystems are outlined in the table that follows.

SENATE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

Subsystem	Functionality	Source	Primary Users	Implementation
FAMIS (Mainframe)	Financial general ledger Vendor file Administrative functions Security functions	Off the shelf federal system purchased from Bearing Point.	Disbursing Office	October 1998
ADPICS (Mainframe)	Preparation of requisition, purchase order, voucher from purchase order, and direct voucher documents. Electronic document review functions Administrative functions	Off the shelf federal system purchased from Bearing Point.	Sergeant at Arms Disbursing Office Secretary of the Senate	October 1998
Checkwriter (Client-server)	Prints checks and check registers as well as ACH (Automated Clearing House) direct deposit payments.	Off the shelf state government system purchased from and adapted to Senate's requirements by Bearing Point.	Disbursing Office	October 1998
Web FMIS (Client-server and intranet)	Preparation of vouchers, travel advances, vouchers from advance documents, credit documents and simple commitment and obligation documents. Entry of detailed budget Reporting functions (described below) Electronic document submission and review functions. Administrative functions	Custom software developed under Senate contract by Bearing Point.	All Senators' offices All Committee offices All Leadership & Support offices. Secretary of the Senate Sergeant at Arms Disbursing Office	October 1999
FATS (PC-based)	Tracks travel advances and petty cash advances (available to Committees only). Tracks election cycle information	Developed by SAA Technology Services	Disbursing Office	Spring 1983
Post Payment Voucher Audit (PC-based)	Selects a random sample of vouchers for which sanctioning was delegated to the Financial Clerk for the Rules Committee to use in conducting a post payment audit.	Excel spreadsheet developed by Bearing Point.	Rules Committee Disbursing Office	Spring 2003
SAVI (Intranet)	As currently implemented, provides self-service access (via the Senate's intranet) to payment information for employees receiving reimbursements. Administrative functions	Off the shelf system purchased from Bearing Point.	Senate employees	Pilot—Spring 2002 Senate-wide—July 2002

SENATE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM—Continued

Subsystem	Functionality	Source	Primary Users	Implementation
Online ESR (Intranet)	A component of SAVI through which Senate employees can create on-line Travel/Non-Travel Expense Summary Reports and submit them electronically to their Office Manager/Chief Clerk for processing.	Custom software developed under contract by Bearing Point.	Senate employees	April 2003
Secretary's Report (Mainframe extracts, crystal reports, and client-server ''tool box'').	Produces the Report of the Secretary of the Senate.	Custom software developed under contract by Bearing Point.	Disbursing Office	Spring 1999
Ledger Statements (Mainframe database extracts, and crystal reports).	Produces monthly reports from FAMIS that are sent to all Senate ''accounting locations''.	Developed by SAA Technology Services	Disbursing Office Senate Accounting Locations.	Winter 1999
Web FMIS Reports (mainframe database extracts, crystal reports, client server, and Intranet).	Produces a large number of reports from Web FMIS, FAMIS and ADPICS data at summary and detailed levels. Data is updated as an overnight process and can be updated through an on-line process by accounting locations.	Custom software developed under contract by Bearing Point.	Senate Accounting Locations	October 1999

Supporting Current Systems

The IT section supports FMIS users in all 140 accounting locations, the Disbursing Office Accounts Payable, Accounting, Disbursements and Front Office Sections, and the Rules Committee Audit staff. The activities associated with this responsibility include:

—User support—provide functional and technical support to all Senate FMIS users; staff the FMIS "help desk"; answer hundreds of phone calls a year; and meet with Chiefs of Staff, Administrative Managers, Chief Clerks, and Directors of various Senate offices as requested;
—Technical problem resolution—ensure that technical problems are resolved;
—Monitor system performance—check system availability and statistics to identify system problems and coordinate performance tuning activities for parallel load and database access optimization;
—Security—maintaining user rights for all ADPICS, FAMIS, SAVI, and Web FMIS users;
—System administration—design, test and make entries to tables that are intrinsic to the system;
—Support of Accounting Activities—provide assistance in the cyclic accounting system activities;
—Support the Rules Committee post payment voucher audit process; and
—Training—provide functional training to all Senate FMIS users.

Of these, the post payment voucher audit deserves recognition. In December of 2002, the Rules Committee delegated to the Financial Clerk the authority for sanctioning vouchers of $35 and less; effective January 1, 2004 this threshold increased to $100.00. The authorization directed Rules and DO to establish a set of procedures for a semi-annual audit of these vouchers. The two offices agreed that Rules would conduct a random sampling inspection of these vouchers based on industry statistical standards. Under the supervision of the IT Group, Bearing Point created tools to determine the sample size, to enable selecting the sample from the universe of vouchers of $100 and less, and to determine the acceptable number of discrepancies given the sample size and the desired confidence interval. Both audits conducted in 2004 resulted in a favorable finding of zero discrepancies. The audit conducted in April 2004 for the six-month period ending March 31, 2004, covered 18,368 vouchers and the audit conducted in November 2004 for the six-month period ending September 30, 2004, covered 25,853 vouchers.

Testing Infrastructure Changes

The SAA provides the infrastructure on which FMIS operates, including the mainframe, the database, security hardware and software, the telecommunications network, and a hardware and software installation crew and help-desk provider. During 2004 there was an upgrade of the mainframe operating system (OS390) in preparation for the implementation of the Z/OS operating system. This required that the Disbursing Office test all FMIS subsystems both in a testing environment and in the production environment.

Managing and Testing New System Development

During 2004, development and extensive integration system testing was performed and implemented with changes to the following FMIS subsystems: Web FMIS; Senate Vendor Information (SAVI) and Online ESR; and Checkwriter.

Web FMIS

The goal for 2004 was to update and simplify the underlying technology of Web FMIS, basically replacing all Visual Basic Client/Server and Cold Fusion Web technology with WebSphere web pages thereby creating a "thin client" application that can be accessed via an intranet browser. The Web FMIS Users Group worked closely with the team to rethink processes and redesign Web FMIS screens to maximize ease-of-use. The transition included four releases of Web FMIS during 2004:

—*Web FMIS r8.0.*—Implemented in March 2004, focused on the list maintenance functions, and conducted a pilot of a new version of the report generation software, Crystal Reports version 9;
—*Web FMIS r8.1.*—Implemented in June 2004, upgraded the version of the report generation software for all users, and concurrently addressed obtaining reports from "archived years" (i.e., fiscal year 1999 and 2000), the data for which was archived from FAMIS. In addition, a "report favorites" function was added;
—*Web FMIS r9.0.*—Implemented for pilot offices in August 2004, was a complete re-writing of the functions most used by offices, Document Entry and Budget Entry. In addition, it allows the start date to determine the funding year (thus eliminating the need to select a funding year from which to pay a bill), added

the ability to import Non-travel Expense Summary Reports, and revamps the user security function to be based on "roles" which provide the Web FMIS system administrators more flexibility in providing (or not providing) specific user functionality.

—*Web FMIS r9.1*.—Implemented for pilot offices in November 2004, made system changes based on the pilot offices' use of Web FMIS r9.

At the end of 2004, testing was conducted on Web FMIS r10, which reduces the files required on the PC for printing reports, adds new reports for committees that show expenses in the format required for their biannual budget justification, rewrites the DO functions as WebSphere web pages and provides additional DO functions such as an online deposit (CD) log, standard text for notes, and additional inquiries. Web FMIS r9.1 will be given to all new 109th Congress offices and to all new office managers from existing offices. All other offices will be transferred to the WebSphere version of Web FMIS when Web FMIS r10 is implemented.

During 2004 work was conducted with Bearing Point to define the requirements for adding electronic signature and documentation imaging functionality, two key components for paperless voucher processing. Additionally, appropriate technology is being explored to provide these functions.

Senate Automated Vendor Inquiry (SAVI) and Online ESR

SAVI enables Senate staff to check the status of reimbursements, whether via check or direct deposit and whether or not referencing an on-line ESR. The on-line ESR function enables Senate staff to create expense summary reports. These documents can be imported into Web FMIS, reducing the data entry tasks for voucher preparation. The SAVI system was upgraded three times in 2004. Release 2.2, implemented in March 2004, completed several security enhancements. Release 3.0, implemented for pilot offices in June 2004 and 3.1 implemented for all offices in October 2004, allow users to prepare and submit Non-travel Expense Summary Reports and to define their own logon ID.

Checkwriter

The Disbursing Office makes payments via direct deposit and via check.

—*Direct Deposit*.—In 2002 the Disbursing Office began making expense reimbursements to Senate staff via direct deposit. In 2003 this was expanded to include external vendors. The initial pilot vendors provided materials to the Keeper of Stationery; and our first payments to them were transmitted on June 3, 2003. After a very successful initial pilot, the program was expanded larger-volume vendors, such as FedEx. During 2004, direct deposit was rolled out to all vendors.

—*Laser Checks*.—In 2004 the printing of checks was switched from a continuous-feed impact printer to a laser printer when checkwriter version 5 was implemented in March 2004. The laser version provides more flexibility for continuance of operations by eliminating dependence on a harder-to-find printer. It also produces a higher print quality, which will help the Postal Service in the delivery of checks and will prevent checks from being negotiated for an unintended dollar amount. Use of the laser check printer required that Treasury create a 8.5 0A 10 inches check and stub form. A folder-inserter machine was used for these checks, but the checks are incompatible with the machine. During 2005, work continues to identify a machine that will accept this heavy-grade check paper.

Planning

There are two main planning activities:

—Schedule coordination—planning and coordinating a rolling 12-month schedule; and

—Strategic planning—setting the priorities for further system enhancements.

Schedule Coordination

In 2004, two types of meetings were held among the DO, SAA and Bearing Point to co-ordinate schedules and activities:

—Project specific meetings—a useful set of project specific working meetings, each of which has a weekly set meeting time and meets for the duration of the project (e.g., Document Purge meetings and Web FMIS requirements meetings); and

—Technical meeting—a weekly meeting among the DO staff (IT and functional), SAA Technical Services staff, and Bearing Point to discuss coordination among the active projects, including scheduling activities and resolving issues.

Strategic Planning

The FMIS strategic plan has a longer time horizon than the rolling 12-month time frame of the technical meeting schedule. It is designed to set the direction and priorities for further enhancements. In 2002 a five-year strategic plan was written by the IT and Accounting staff for Disbursing Office Strategic Initiatives. This detailed description of five strategic initiatives formed the basis for the Secretary of the Senate's request for $5 million in multi-year funds for further work on the FMIS project. The five strategic initiatives are:

—*Paperless Vouchers—Imaging of Supporting Documentation and Electronic Signatures*.—Beginning with a feasibility study and a pilot, implement new technology, including imaging and electronic signatures, that will reduce the Senate's dependence on paper vouchers. This will enable continuation of voucher processing operations from any location, should an emergency occur;

—*Web FMIS*.—Requests from Accounting Locations—Respond to requests from the Senate's Accounting Locations for additional functionality in Web FMIS;

—*Payroll System*.—Requests from Accounting Locations—Respond to requests from the Senate's Accounting Locations for on-line real time access to payroll data;

—*Accounting Sub-system Integration*.—Integrate Senate-specific accounting systems, improve internal controls, and eliminate errors caused by re-keying of data; and

—*CFO Financial Statement Development*.—Provide the Senate with the capacity to produce auditable financial statements that will obtain an unqualified opinion.

Managing the FMIS Project

The responsibility for managing the FMIS project was transferred to the IT group during the summer of 2003 and includes developing the task orders with contractors and overseeing their work. In 2004, three new task orders were executed: Web FMIS r10; Fiscal Year 2004 Extended Operational Support (September 2004-August 2005); and SAA Finance System and Reporting Enhancements.

In addition, work continued under two task orders executed in 2003: Web FMIS Thin Client; and Web FMIS Imaging and Digital Signature Design and Electronic Invoicing and Remittance Enhancements.

Administering the Disbursing Office's Local Area Network (LAN)

The DO administers its own Local Area Network (LAN), which is separate from the LAN for the rest of the Secretary's Office. Our LAN Administrator's activities included: Office-wide LAN Maintenance and Upgrade; Projects for the Accounting Section; and Projects for the Payroll and Benefits Section.

Office-wide LAN maintenance and upgrade

Existing workstations were maintained with appropriate upgrades including:

—Configured and installed a new Windows 2000 server and transferred all critical DO data to this server;

—Implemented an automatic update for the virus scanning software on each PC in the DO;

—Selected and supervised installation of new printers for DO staff and placed multi-purpose printer/scanner/copier machines in strategic locations;

—Installed new stand-alone PCs for communication with the Federal Reserve's Fedline system in the DO and at the Alternate Computing Facility; and

—Maintained the Office Information Authorization form log which provides easy access from DO staff desktops to up-to-date information about the authorized contacts for each Senate office.

Projects for the Accounting Sections

The activities of the Accounting Section were supported with the implementation of a direct connection to the Treasury Department. This eliminated creating and delivering a monthly magnetic tape.

Projects for Payroll and Employee Benefits Sections

Activities of the Payroll and Employee Benefits sections were supported with three specific projects:

—Implemented a Payroll Imaging system, developed by SAA staff. This system captures payroll documents turned in at the DO front counter electronically;

—Assisted Benefits staff on transferring data electronically to other agencies; and

—Training Payroll and Benefits staff on creating fillable PDF forms.

Coordinating the Disbursing Office's Disaster Recovery Activities

During 2004, the Sergeant at Arms' office completed the build out of the Alternative Computing Facility. In December 2004, a two-day test was performed to operate FMIS subsystems from this location. The tests of all mainframe systems (i.e., payroll, ADPICS and FAMIS) were successful and payroll and voucher payments were made via direct deposit and check. Additionally, documents were created, posted, and printed via Web FMIS and ADPICS. Document printing has always presented problems during past tests; however, system configuration at the ACF has resolved this problem. The next test is planned for May 2005, when additional FMIS sub-systems will be tested.

Disbursing Office COOP Activities

The DO staff wrote a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) in 2001. This document addresses issues beyond the scope of disaster recovery. Normal maintenance is performed on this document to ensure that it remains up-to-date and viable. In addition to the success of the disaster recovery testing in December, the DO's most significant COOP related activity was the setup and pre-positioning of essential equipment and supplies in the dedicated space at the ACF. This accomplishment significantly improves the DO's ability to quickly respond to and complete its core responsibilities.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

1. CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

The Office of Conservation and Preservation develops and coordinates programs directly related to the conservation and preservation of Senate records and materials for which the Secretary of the Senate has statutory authority. This office's initiatives include deacidification of paper and prints, phased conservation for books and documents, collection surveys, exhibits, and matting and framing for the Senate leadership.

Over the past year the Office of Conservation and Preservation has embossed 275 books and matted and framed 525 items for the Senate leadership. The office is especially proud to be a part of a Senate tradition. For more than 23 years, the office has bound a copy of Washington's Farewell Address for the annual Washington's Farewell Address ceremony. In 2004, a volume was bound for and read by Senator John Breaux.

As mandated in the 1990 Senate Library Collection Condition Survey, the Office of Conservation and Preservation continued to conduct an annual treatment of books identified by the survey as needing conservation or repair. In 2003, conservation treatments were completed for 65 volumes of a 7,000 volume collection of House Hearings. Specifically, treatment involved recasing each volume as required, using alkaline end sheets, replacing acidic tab sheets with alkaline paper, cleaning the cloth cases, and replacing black spine title labels of each volume as necessary. The Office of Conservation and Preservation will continue preservation of the remaining 4,100 volumes.

This office assisted the Senate Library with 531 books sent to the Library Binding section of the Government Printing Office (GPO) for binding and with five exhibits located in the Senate Russell building basement corridor. The Office of Conservation and Preservation also assisted the Senate Curator's staff with special matting & framing required for the World War II exhibit located on the first floor of the Capitol.

This office continues to assist Senate offices with conservation and preservation of documents, books, and various other items. For example, the office is currently monitoring the temperature and humidity in the Senate Library storage areas, the vault and warehouse for preservation and conservation purposes

2. CURATOR

The Office of Senate Curator, on behalf of the Senate Commission on Art ("Commission"), develops and implements the museum and preservation programs for the United States Senate. The Office collects, preserves, and interprets the Senate's fine and decorative arts, historic objects, and specific architectural features; and exercises supervisory responsibility for the chambers in the Capitol under the jurisdiction of the Commission. Through exhibitions, publications, and other programs, the Office educates the public about the Senate and its collections.

Collections: Commissions, Acquisitions, and Management

Portraits of Senators Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan and Robert Wagner of New York were officially unveiled on September 14, 2004 in the Senate Reception Room.

The new paintings join portraits of the "Famous Five" Senators commissioned for the room and installed in 1959.

The painting of Senator George Mitchell for the Senate Leadership Portrait Collection was completed and approved by the Commission on Art, and the portrait of Senator Margaret Chase Smith is in its final stage. Both will be unveiled in 2005. Another important commissioned work in progress is a portrait of Senator Bob Dole.

S. Res. 177 directed the Commission to commission a mural commemorating the Connecticut Compromise. The Rules Committee directed that the mural be added to the Senate Reception Room, and the Commission empaneled an advisory board of experts in the field to select and recommend an appropriate scene and three potential artists. These artists developed proposals, and the advisory board reviewed these sketches and have recommended a final candidate to the Commission for consideration.

Fourteen objects were accessioned into the Senate Collection, including a Senate Reception Room chair from the 1860's (private donation); a reproduction Senate Chamber desk used on the set of the movie "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington and" "Advise and Consent" (gift of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society); an 1870's cabinet card album attributed to the Mathew Brady studio (private donation); and several historic prints and political cartoons.

At the direction of the Commission, the Curator's Office facilitated the acquisition of a Cornelius & Baker armorial chandelier owned by Tudor Place in Washington, D.C. The purchase of this rare historic fixture, which is similar to one that hung in the second floor corridor of the Senate wing, is an important addition to the Capitol's decorative and lighting history.

Twenty-four new foreign gifts were reported to the Select Committee on Ethics and transferred to the Curator's Office. They were catalogued, and are maintained by the office in accordance with the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act. Appropriate disposition of 12 objects in the collection was completed following established procedures.

As construction continued on the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC), the office worked with the Architect of the Capitol's CVC staff to plan the two storage rooms designated for Senate Collection objects, to ensure the highest level of preservation standards. A conservator specializing in museum facility planning reviewed the design drawings and provided recommendations, including outfitting the storage spaces. A detailed survey of the entire collection was completed, and the findings will be incorporated into a Collection Storage Plan.

An off-site collection storage facility, made available for use through a lease arranged by the Senate Sergeant at Arms (SAA) in 2003, continued to provide much needed secure, climate controlled, museum quality storage for objects in the Senate Collection. An additional 18 objects were transferred to the storage facility.

The office has worked for several years with the SAA regarding plans for the construction of a warehouse space to meet the stringent requirements for storing fine and decorative art. In 2004 specifications developed by the office were used by the SAA to create plans and begin construction on such a space, in association with the larger effort to build a new Senate warehouse.

The Curator's Office initiated a comprehensive project to photograph the 102 historic Senate Chamber desks (which includes the 100 on the Senate floor and two desks currently in storage). One set of transparencies will be stored off-site for emergency purposes, while a second working set will be used for the web, image requests, and future publications. Twenty desks were photographed in 2004; the project is scheduled to be completed in December 2007.

In keeping with established procedures, all Senate Collection objects on display were inventoried noting any changes in location. As directed by S. Res. 178, the office submitted inventories of the art and historic furnishings in the Senate to the Rules Committee. The inventories, submitted every six months, are compiled by the Curator's Office with assistance from the SAA and the AOC's Senate Superintendent's office.

Conservation and Restoration

A total of 24 objects received conservation treatment in 2004. These included 15 Senate Chamber desks, two large sculptures, three plaster reliefs, three oil on canvas paintings, and one manuscript collection.

The initiative to conserve the 100 historic Senate Chamber desks began in 1999. Twice a year, during Senate recess periods, desks are removed from the Senate Chamber and sent out for restoration. Treatment is extensive, and follows a detailed protocol developed to address the wear and degradation of these historic desks due to continued heavy use. To date, 91 desks have been restored and the project is on track to be completed in 2005. A condition survey completed in 2003 stressed the necessity of installing rubber bumpers to the arms of the Senate Chamber chairs to protect the front of the desks from continued damage. Seventy-eight chairs are now modified with bumpers.

Due to numerous construction projects in the Capitol, several works of art were relocated. The large sculpture, *Justice and History*, displayed in the Senate subway terminal, was moved in 2003 due to CVC construction. Work entailed separating the large sections of marble that comprise the sculpture and moving each half individually. Arrangements were made during January 2004 to restore the plaster surface by repairing the seam between the two halves and treating other minor damage and stains to the plaster coat. The conservator also performed treatment and cleaning on three plaster relief sculptures located nearby.

In May 2004, the portrait, *George Washington (Patriae Pater)*, and the sculpture, *Eagle and Shield*, were removed from display in the Old Senate Chamber to protect them from possible damage during construction on the roof above. A fine art handling company deinstalled and crated the art works. The office took the opportunity to have conservators assess the condition of the pieces and perform surface cleaning. The conservators also collected samples from the surface of the *Eagle and Shield* to document the historic finishes. Analysis of the samples will provide invaluable information to guide future restoration decisions.

The Isaac Bassett Manuscript Collection will be microfilmed during 2005. A conservator was hired to conduct an assessment of the collection, carry out necessary conservation treatment prior to microfilming, and rehouse the papers for preservation.

The office initiated a detailed condition and identification survey of the nearly 100 historic mirrors in the Senate wing. A conservator was contracted to undertake the work, which will include extensive written and photo documentation for each piece. The project has significant benefits: the condition assessments will determine priorities for conservation and maintenance treatments; provide information on the age, origin, and importance of the frames; and furnish documentation for disaster planning. Half the mirrors have been surveyed, and the project will be completed in 2005.

The Curator's staff participated in training sessions for the Capitol Police regarding the care and protection of art in the Capitol, and continued to educate the housekeeping personnel on maintenance issues related to the fine and decorative art collections.

Historic Preservation

Preservation work included extensive research, documentation, record keeping, and project review. The program emphasizes infrastructure development and oversight.

The office worked with the AOC and the SAA to review, comment, and document Senate construction projects. In addition to offering direction in project development and methodology, the office maintains records on all known Senate wing projects. Documentation associated with those files varies in accordance with office involvement and impact on historic resources. Projects that required considerable review and assistance included: Brumidi corridor restoration phase VIII; window shutter refinishing; emergency strobe and horn installation; grand stairwell plaster replacement; marble step repair; plaster assessment program; Brumidi west corridor egress installation; and cell phone antenna installation. Additionally, the office is working closely with the AOC in the creation of an historic structures report for the Senate vestibule, adjacent stairwell, and small Senate rotunda. When completed, the report will provide critical documentation regarding the architectural history of these spaces, and will serve as the foundation for any future preservation work.

The architectural chronology and social history databases established in 2003 were further refined, with new information entered as it became available and existing files systematically incorporated. While the office databases and files provide a significant resource for room and object histories, a project initiated in October will greatly increase the office's research capabilities. Currently, the historic preservation officer is working with the Senate Library to create an electronic database of all AOC, SAA, and Secretary of the Senate annual reports. Related to this effort, is a new initiative to photo document leadership suites during each Congress. This will allow the office to report on "decorative" changes in leadership rooms over time. With requests from Senate offices for information pertaining to room histories, architectural features, and historic images dramatically increasing, these initiatives allow for quick retrieval of necessary information.

Historic Chambers

The Curator's staff continued to maintain the Old Senate and Old Supreme Court Chambers, and coordinated periodic use of both rooms for special occasions. By order of the U.S. Capitol Police, the Old Senate Chamber was closed to visitors after September 11, 2001. However, during most Senate recesses in 2004, the historic room was opened to tours. Twenty-six requests were received from current Members of Congress for after hours access to the chamber. Of special significance was the filming of a documentary history on the Capitol by C-SPAN using high definition equipment. B-roll footage was also requested and provided to Lion Television in Scotland for a documentary on Charles Dickens in America. Twenty-one requests were received by current Members of Congress for admittance to the Old Supreme Court Chamber after hours. The office also coordinated with the AOC to install emergency strobe lights in each chamber as part of the life-safety upgrade program.

Loans To and From the Collection

A total of 76 historic objects and paintings are currently on loan to the Curator's Office on behalf of Senate leadership and officials in the Capitol. The staff added loans of two portraits for leadership suites, returned 11 paintings and prints at the expiration of their loan periods to their respective owners, and renewed loan agreements for 18 other objects. In addition, the office coordinated the loan of six oil study sketches by Robert Chester La Follette of Senators Clay, Calhoun, Webster, La Follette, and Taft, which relate to the 1958 commission for the Senate Reception Room portraits. The sketches are currently on loan from the daughter of the late artist, and have been approved for accession into the Senate Collection in 2005.

The Curator's Office obtained an oil sketch by Constantino Brumidi for study and appraisal. The painting is a preparatory sketch completed around 1874 by the artist for his fresco mural, the *Signing of the First Treaty of Peace with Great Britain*, located above room S–118 in the Brumidi Corridors. The sketch has now been acquired for the Senate Collection.

The office continued to work with CVC staff to assemble information on Senate Collection objects. Condition reports were conducted on those objects currently being considered for loan, and exhibit labels were written for all Senate-related artifacts planned for the exhibition. The office also assisted in developing a CVC Art Task Force, composed of prominent curators, architects, and designers, to recommend short- and long-term plans for art in the Visitor Center. The first meeting was held in December, and a white paper will be developed in the next few months.

The Secretary's china was distributed and returned six times in 2004. It was used for events including a dinner for the Senate spouses, and luncheons for the current First Lady and former First Lady Nancy Reagan. The official Senate china was inventoried and used at 28 receptions for distinguished guests, both foreign and domestic.

Publications and Exhibitions

Work continued on the *United States Senate Catalogue of Graphic Art*, to be published in 2005. The volume features the Senate's collection of more than 900 historic engravings and lithographs, and includes two full-length essays and almost 40 short essays discussing selected prints. The Senate Curator and Associate Senate Historian are co-authors of the publication. It is a companion volume to the *United States Senate Catalogue of Fine Art* published in 2003.

In August 2004, the office de-installed the popular photographic exhibition, *The United States Capitol: Photographs by Fred J. Maroon*, and installed *World War II: The Senate and the Nation's Capital*, an exhibition of photographs exploring how the Senate "went to war" and how the war came to Washington, D.C. The Senate Historical Office and Curator's Office developed the exhibit, which is located on the first floor of the Senate wing.

In association with the Office of Web Technology and a web design contractor, the office worked on developing and posting two interactive exhibits to the Senate web site. The exhibits, *Take the Puck Challenge!*, and *Advise and Consent: The Drawings of Lily Spandorf*, were originally produced for stand-alone kiosks in the Capitol. They are being translated into Flash presentations to become internet compatible. *Take the Puck Challenge!* features quizzes, games, and puzzles to introduce viewers to the political cartoons of the nineteenth-century satirical magazine, Puck. *Advise and Consent* explores the work of Lily Spandorf, an artist who sketched the filming of the Otto Preminger movie of the same name, filmed in and around the Capitol in 1962. Ms. Spandorf's drawings are owned by the Senate.

The internet exhibit, *"I Do Solemnly Swear": A Half Century of Inaugural Images*, was developed for the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies

(JCCIC), and features images from the Senate's Graphic Art Collection illustrating inaugural events from 1853 to 1905.

Several brochures were reprinted in 2004, and one new publication produced, *The U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee*. The office also continued to be a significant contributor to Unum, the Secretary of the Senate's newsletter.

As part of an ongoing program to provide information about the Capitol's art and historic spaces, new informational panels were installed for the paintings of *George Washington at Princeton and Recall of Columbus*.

Policies and Procedures

In 2004, the Senate Curatorial Advisory Board was established by statute. Composed of respected scholars and curators, this board was established to (i) provide expert advice to the Commission regarding the Senate's art and historic collections and preservation program, and (ii) assist in the acquisition and review of new objects for the collections. During 2004, the 12-member board was empaneled and the first meeting was held.

Additionally, the Commission established the Senate Preservation Board of Trustees. This board, composed of eminent citizens, was established to enable the acquisition of significant art works and historical objects and to facilitate preservation projects for the Commission. Currently, the Commission, through the Curator's office, is fielding nominations for the board from Commission members and an initial meeting will be held in the spring of 2005.

Collaborations, Educational Programs, and Events

In preparation for the presidential inauguration, the JCCIC requested various assistance from the Curator's Office. The staff was responsible for handling all details regarding the historic painting and podium for display at the inaugural luncheon; assisting with the printed programs and gift portfolio; and developing a collecting plan to ensure appropriate material would be saved for the Senate Collection. The Curator's Administrator served on the JCCIC design team for the web site, while the Curatorial Assistant was assigned to the Committee, serving as its Deputy Capitol Coordinator.

Office Administration

As part of the continuing effort to safeguard collections and records against possible disaster, work began to microfiche and digitize the collection object files. These files are the primary legal title, research, and management records for all art and historical objects in the Senate's collections. Copies of the fiche and digital records will be kept off site for disaster recovery and archival purposes. Additional copies will be used on site for research and public information in order to lessen the wear and tear on the original paper records.

Automation

The office upgraded its electronic collection management database, allowing for more efficient and accurate conversion of collection information into web site applications. The staff is participating in a pilot program to introduce Groove project management software to the Secretary's Office.

In 2004 a PDF version of the publication, *United States Senate Catalogue of Fine Art*, was posted on the web site, and work is proceeding to add the essays from that volume to the web pages for each piece of art. In addition, the office completed photographing and scanning the 980 historical engravings and political cartoons in the Graphic Art Collection; work on adding these to the site will begin shortly. Due to an increased presence of the Senate Collection on the Senate.gov web site, requests for collection images increased dramatically.

Objectives for 2005

A major initiative in the upcoming year will be the creation of several new museum quality storage areas for the Senate Collection. At the end of 2004, a site was selected for a new Senate warehouse facility that will be outfitted to include a room with climate control, security, and equipment to house Senate Collection objects. Work will include research and review of appropriate museum storage equipment and monitoring systems, and planning the move of collections into the new facility. Additionally, planning for the Curator's storage spaces in the CVC will be guided by the results of the contract with the conservator specializing in collections storage.

Conservation and preservation concerns continue to be a priority. Projects in 2005 will include the restoration of nine Senate Chamber desks—completing the seven year conservation treatment program; assessment and conservation of the painting, the *First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation* by F.B. Carpenter; and restoration of the Senate's historic portrait of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart. Two conservators from the National Gallery of Art recently provided an assessment of the condition of paintings on display in the Senate wing, and provided recommendations for the conservation of the Stuart panting. Two recently commissioned paintings, of Blanche Kelso Bruce and James O. Eastland, will receive light cleaning and application of a varnish coat to enhance and protect the portraits now that the paint has properly cured.

The Senate Preservation Board of Trustees will hold its first meeting. The Senate Curatorial Advisory Board will continue to meet semi-annually and address such issues as the Commission and the office of the Senate Curator may bring before it.

Work on the *United States Senate Catalogue of Graphic Art* will be completed in 2005. Information panels for three paintings will be developed: *The Florida Case before the Electoral Commission*, *The Battle of Lake Erie*, and *First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation*.

Internet exhibits will include sites on Isaac Bassett and the Senate Chamber desks. The Isaac Bassett exhibit will feature art works, historic images, and objects from the Senate Collection, as well as portions of the Bassett manuscript, highlighting the 64-year career of this nineteenth-century Senate employee. The Senate Chamber desk exhibit will bring together all historical information on the desks, as well as discuss the conservation efforts. The site will prove invaluable to anyone seeking information on desk occupants, desk styles, and Senate floor seating configurations. Other web activities include increasing the art and historic information on the site, and posting new acquisitions.

To streamline the process for adding new objects to the Senate Collection, a tracking system for potential accessions will be developed. The system will improve the collection of information and the availability of collection documentation. A thorough review and consideration of the Incoming Objects Register collection will commence with the development of the tracking system. Additionally, the Registration department will implement an electronic tracking system to improve the accuracy and efficiency of loan renewals.

Collection activities will include efforts to locate and recover historic Senate pieces long associated with the institution. Work has begun to find an early Senate Chamber chair by Thomas Constantine, a Russell Office Building desk by George Cobb, and furnishings associated with the Old Supreme Court Chamber.

The office will proceed with the Connecticut Compromise mural and the portrait of Senator Bob Dole. Unveilings will be held for the Senator George Mitchell and Senator Margaret Chase Smith paintings.

An oral history program will be developed, based on the Senate Historical Office's successful format, to document the history of the Senate's collections. Artists, cabinetmakers, donors, and others will be interviewed, and appropriate information posted on the Senate web site.

Microfiching of the fine art collection files and microfilming of the Isaac Bassett papers will be completed, as will the project to digitize the annual reports from the AOC, SAA, and Secretary of the Senate. The office will continue to photograph the Senate Chamber desks.

The office plans to expand its use of Groove project management software. It is hoped that by the end of the year all staff will achieve a reasonable level of proficiency in the program and that many projects will be managed and their status reported to the Secretary using this application.

With the recent acquisition of the Cornelius & Baker armorial chandelier, the office will oversee the transfer and storage of the fixture, and will work with the Senate Curatorial Advisory Board to review options for the future use of the fixture within the Senate wing.

The office will undertake several major research initiatives. Research on the Old Senate Chamber *Eagle and Shield* will be conducted in conjunction with major decorative art museums and scholars, and it is hoped that it will result in determining the origin, maker, and original condition of this important symbolic image. Research will begin on the Senate Chamber chairs. No original 1819 chairs remain in the chamber, and as new chairs were constructed over the years, many design features and materials changed. Documenting these changes will help determine the authenticity and age of any chair that might appear for sale or donation; currently several such chairs are being considered for acquisition.

Of importance is the development of a five year plan for the Senate Preservation Program. In creating the plan, the Curator's staff will further their knowledge of state capitol preservation efforts by visiting other sites and meeting with local and state preservationists, and will seek advice from the Senate Curatorial Advisory Board. This will be a major initiative in advancing the Preservation Program.

3. JOINT OFFICE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Joint Office of Education and Training provides employee training and development opportunities for all Senate staff both in Washington D.C. and in the states. There are three branches within the department. The technical training branch is responsible for providing technical training support for approved software packages used in either Washington or the state offices. The computer training staff provides instructor-led classes; one-on-one coaching sessions; specialized training provided by vendors, computer based training; and informal training and support services. The professional training branch provides courses for all Senate staff in areas including management and leadership development, human resources issues and staff benefits, legislative and staff information, new staff and intern information. The Health Promotion branch provides seminars, classes and screenings on health related and wellness issues. This branch also coordinates an annual Health Fair for all Senate employees and four blood drives each year.

Training Classes

The Joint Office of Education and Training offered 581 classes in 2004. 5,252 Senate employees participated in these classes. The registration desk handled 20,467 requests for training and documentation.

Of the above total, in the Technical Training area 265 classes were held with a total attendance of 1,093 students. An additional 702 staff received coaching on various software packages and other computer related issues.

In the Professional Development area 316 classes were held with a total attendance of 4,159 students. Individual managers and supervisors are also encouraged to request customized training for their offices on areas of need.

The Office of Education and Training is available to work with teams on issues related to team performance, communication or conflict resolution. During 2004, 40 requests for special training or team building were met. Professional development staff also traveled to state offices to conduct specialized training and team building during the year. During the last quarter of the year, training was offered via video teleconferencing to two state offices.

In the Health Promotion area, 708 Senate staff participated in Health Promotion activities throughout the year. These activities included cancer screening, bone density screening and seminars on health related topics. Additionally 1,310 staff participated in the Annual Health Fair held in September.

The Joint Office of Education and Training has actively worked with the Office of Security and Emergency Preparedness to provide security training for Senate staff. In 2004, the Office of Education and Training coordinated 53 sessions of escape hood and other security related training for 1,683 Senate staff.

State Training

Since most of the classes that are offered are only practical for D.C. based staff, the Office of Education and Training continues to offer the "State Training Fair" which began in March 2000. In 2004, two sessions of this program were offered to state staff. This office also conducted our annual State Directors Forum for the second year. In addition, this office has implemented the "Virtual Classroom" which is an internet based training library of 300+ courses. To date, 396 state office and DC staff have used this training option.

4. CHIEF COUNSEL FOR EMPLOYMENT

Background

The Office of the Senate Chief Counsel for Employment ("SCCE") is a non-partisan office established at the direction of the Joint Leadership in 1993 after enactment of the Government Employee Rights Act ("GERA"), which allowed Senate employees to file claims of employment discrimination against Senate offices. With the enactment of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 ("CAA"), Senate offices became subject to the requirements, responsibilities and obligations of 11 employment laws. The SCCE is charged with all legal defense of Senate offices in all employment law cases at both the administrative and court levels. Also, on a day-to-day basis, the office provides legal advice to Senate offices about their obligations under employment laws. Accordingly, each of the 180 offices of the Senate is an individual client of the SCCE, and each office maintains an attorney-client relationship with the SCCE.

The areas of responsibilities of the SCCE can be divided into the following categories:

—Litigation (Defending Senate Offices in Federal Court)

—Mediations to Resolve Lawsuits

—Court-Ordered Alternative Dispute Resolutions
—Preventive Legal Advice
—Union Drives, Negotiations and Unfair Labor Practice Charges
—OSHA/Americans With Disability Act (“ADA”) Compliance
—Layoffs and Office Closings In Compliance With the Law
—Management Training Regarding Legal Responsibilities
—Litigation; Mediations; Alternative Dispute Resolutions

The SCCE represents each of the 180 employing offices of the Senate in all court actions (including both trial and appellate courts), hearings, proceedings, investigations, and negotiations relating to labor and employment laws. The SCCE handles cases filed in the District of Columbia and cases filed in any of the 50 states.

Union Drives, Negotiations And Unfair Labor Practice Charges

In 2004, no employees attempted to unionize. Therefore, the SCCE handled no union drives.

OSHA/ADA Compliance

The SCCE provides advice and assistance to Senate offices in complying with the applicable OSHA and ADA regulations; representing them during Office of Compliance inspections; advising state offices on the preparation of the Office of Compliance's Home State OSHA/ADA Inspection Questionnaires; assisting offices in the preparation of Emergency Action Plans; and advising and representing Senate offices when a complaint of an OSHA violation has been filed with the Office of Compliance or when a citation has been issued. In 2004, the SCCE assisted all Senate offices in preparing for OSHA/ADA inspections, pre-inspected 12 offices, and gave 9 OSHA/ADA seminars.

Management Training Regarding Legal Responsibilities

The SCCE conducts legal seminars for the managers of Senate offices to assist them in complying with employment laws. In 2004, the SCCE gave 51 legal seminars to Senate offices. Among the topics covered were:

—Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace;
—The Congressional Accountability Act of 1995: What Managers Need to Know About Their Legal Obligations;
—Managers' Obligations Under the Family and Medical Leave Act;
—The Legal Pitfalls of Hiring the Right Employee: Advertising, Interviewing, Drug Testing and Background Checks;
—Disciplining, Evaluating and Terminating an Employee Without Violating Employment Laws;
—Management's Obligations Under the Americans With Disabilities Act;
—Equal Pay for Equal Work: Management's Obligations Under the Equal Pay Act;
—The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA): Steps Your Office Must Take to Verify Employment Eligibility;
—Enhancing Diversity and Avoiding Discrimination in the Workplace; and
—Workplace Violence.

Preventive Legal Advice

At times, a Senate office will become aware that an employee is contemplating legal action, and the office will request the SCCE's legal advice and/or that the SCCE negotiate with the employee's attorney before the employee files a lawsuit.

Also, the SCCE advises and meets with Members, Chiefs of Staff, Administrative Managers, Staff Directors, Chief Clerks and General Counsels at their request. The purpose is to prevent litigation and to minimize liability in the event of litigation. For example, on a daily basis, the SCCE advises Senate offices on matters such as disciplining or terminating employees in compliance with the law, handling and investigating sexual harassment complaints, accommodating the disabled, determining wage law requirements, meeting the requirements of the Family and Medical Leave Act, and management's rights and obligations under union laws and OSHA.

5. SENATE GIFT SHOP

The Senate Gift Shop was established under administrative direction and supervision of the Secretary of the Senate (SOS) in October 1992, (United States Code, Title 2—Chapter 4). The Gift Shop provides services to Senators, their spouses, staffs, and constituents, and the many visitors to the U.S. Capitol complex. Products include a wide variety of souvenirs, collectibles and fine gift items created exclusively for the U.S. Senate. Services include special ordering of personalized products, custom framing, gold embossing, engraving and shipping.

Facilities

For several years the services offered by the Senate Gift Shop were over-the-counter sales to walk-in customers at a single location. Today, after more than 10 years in operation, and as a result of extended services and continued growth, the Gift Shop now provides service from three different locations. Services from these locations include walk-in sales, telephone orders, fax orders, mail orders, and a variety of special order and catalog sales.

Plans for the movement of inventory from the offsite warehouses to the soon-to-be completed SAA warehouse are currently being formulated. Plans include but are not limited to taking a physical inventory of Gift Shop merchandise stored at both offsite warehouses, devising methods for securing product on pallets and carts in preparation for transportation, transporting the merchandise, and the shelving of inventory upon delivery to the new warehouse.

Operational procedures for the new location such as staffing requirements, receiving, shipping, and security are currently under consideration. These issues as well as other procedural considerations will be more clearly defined through a series of meetings and communications between SAA and SOS Gift Shop staff as the warehouse construction nears completion.

Sales Activity

Sales recorded for fiscal year 2004 are $1,494,744.51. Cost of goods sold during this same period are $1,005,348.34, accounting for a gross profit of $489,396.17.

In addition to tracking gross profit from sales, the Senate Gift Shop maintains a revolving fund and a record of on-hand inventory. As of October 1, 2004, the revolving fund balance was $1,683,079.32 and the on-hand inventory was valued at $2,090,474.06.

Additional Activity

One of the most important objectives for 2003 and 2004 was replacing point-of-sale and accounting software, Basic Four, which was more than twenty years old and no longer meeting the increasingly unique needs of the Gift Shop.

The company providing the hardware and performing the system installation of the new retail and financial management system, has completed the bulk of the contract work and is nearing completion of the last few deliverables of the contract. The deliverables that remain to be fulfilled include the ability to export and import financial data from the Senate Disbursing Office into the Gift Shop's Great Plains accounting system, the delivery of a basic Web Store/Kiosk database engine and the development of an e-commerce storefront.

The selected software packages, Microsoft Retail Management System, Headquarters, Store Operations and Great Plains, are off-the-shelf products that required little modification to meet the specific requirements of Senate Gift Shop operations. Currently Gift Shop staff continue to modify and create databases that will serve as the foundation for the new retail system. Databases include inventory, financial data and other information required for detailed reports. Contractors are currently working to solve programming issues and are confident that they will be able to complete the contract obligations in the very near future.

It is important to note that the new system not only will meet the Gift Shop's current and near-future requirements, but will also accommodate potential add-on features such as intranet and internet sales.

Accomplishments and New Products in Fiscal Year 2004

Official Congressional Holiday Ornaments

The year 2002 marked the beginning of the Gift Shop's third consecutive "four-year ornament series." Each ornament in the 2002–2005 series of unique collectibles features an architectural milestone of the United States Capitol and is packaged with corresponding historical text taken from the book, *History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics* by William C. Allen, Architectural Historian in the office of the Architect of the Capitol.

Our 11th annual ornament was released in 2004 and shows the Capitol enlarged with new marble wings and cast-iron dome designed by Philadelphia architect Thomas U. Walter who was appointed architect of the Capitol extension in 1851. Walter enlivened the foreground of his drawing with a spirited scene of carriages, horses and crowds of people. In keeping with a Gift Shop tradition, the authentic colors of the original drawing were reproduced onto a white porcelain stone and set with a brass frame finished in 24kt gold.

Sales of the 2004 holiday ornament exceeded 33,000, of which more than 7,400 were personalized with engravings designed, proofed and etched by Gift Shop staff. Sales revenue from this year's ornament generated more than $40,000 in scholarship funds for the Senate Child Care Center.

Pickard China Porcelain "Executive Authority" Box

Executive Authority, released in 2004, is the third in a series of four porcelain boxes that display different images from the Constantino Brumidi fresco paintings on the ceiling of the President's Room in the Senate Wing of the United States Capitol. The first and second boxes in the series, *Liberty and Legislation*, were released in 2002 and 2003. The final piece of this series, *Religion*, will be released later this year.

United States Senate Catalogue of Fine Art

The Gift Shop purchased for resale the book, *United States Senate Catalogue of Fine Art*. In order to ensure availability of this publication for an extended period of time, a large quantity was secured.

Projects and New Ideas for 2005

108th Congressional Plate

The series of Official Congressional Plates will continue this year with the design, development and manufacture of the 108th and 109th Congressional Plates. The design stage for both plates has been completed and prototypes are being produced by Tiffany & Co.

In addition to determining the design for the 108th and 109th Congressional Plates, final artwork is under development with Tiffany's for the 110th and 111th Congressional Plates.

Constantino Brumidi Birthday Celebration

This year marks the 200th Birthday of Constantino Brumidi, "The Artist of the Capitol." In celebration of this special occasion, Gift Shop staff will work closely with the staff of the Curator's Office throughout 2005 on an initiative to add to our collection of Brumidi-inspired merchandise.

Intranet/Webster

The Gift Shop actively continues to develop its website. Primary considerations include website policy, design and layout, content and products to be featured. It is the Gift Shop's intention to quickly include links to the offices of the Historian, Curator and Senate Library so the Senate community using Webster will have ready access to additional information pertaining to the product or subject of their interest.

6. HISTORICAL OFFICE

Serving as the Senate's institutional memory, the Historical Office collects and provides information on important events, precedents, dates, statistics, and historical comparisons of current and past Senate activities for use by members and staff, the media, scholars, and the general public.

The Office advises Senators, officers, and committees on cost-effective disposition of their non-current office files and assists researchers in identifying Senate-related source materials. The Office keeps extensive biographical, bibliographical, photographic, and archival information on the 1,784 former Senators. It edits for publication historically significant transcripts and minutes of selected Senate committees and party organizations, and conducts oral history interviews with key Senate staff. The photo historian maintains a collection of approximately 40,000 still pictures that includes photographs and illustrations of Senate committees and most former Senators. The Office develops and maintains all historical material on the Senate web site.

Editorial Projects

Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress, 1774–2005.—In May 2003, both Houses of Congress adopted H. Con. Res. 138, authorizing printing of the sixteenth edition of the *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–2005*. The first edition of this indispensable reference source was published in 1859; the most recent edition appeared in 1989. Since 1989, the assistant historian has added many new biographical sketches, expanded bibliography entries, and revised and updated most of the database's 1,875 Senate entries. In preparation for the new print edition, scheduled for release in late spring/early summer of 2005, the assistant historian has updated the Congress-by-Congress listing of members through the 108th

Congress, updated the listing of executive branch officers, and completed the editing and proofing of all Senate-related information. In addition, existing information has been edited to allow for expanded search capabilities on the online version at http://bioguide.congress.gov.

Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies (JCCIC).—In early 2004, the Office began consulting with the JCCIC to develop historical content for the JCCIC's web site. The Office conducted historical research and compiled files for every inauguration since 1789. Based on the information collected, staff provided historical data for each inauguration, and wrote brief articles on all aspects of inauguration day, from the morning prayer service to the evening's ball (including the procession to the Capitol, the swearing-in ceremony, the inaugural luncheon, and the parade). The photo historian located and provided photographs and illustrations to accompany the inauguration profiles and articles. Office staff assisted JCCIC staff with publishing these materials to the Web site. In addition to the Web site, the Office assisted the JCCIC with developing the inaugural theme, and wrote and edited content for printed materials, including the platform program, luncheon program, and the luncheon portfolio.

Capitol Visitor Center Exhibition Content Committee.—Staff historians continued to assist the Capitol Preservation Commission in drafting text for the exhibition gallery of the Capitol Visitor Center. During 2004, the Office worked with Donna Lawrence Productions to develop a script for a CVC visitor orientation film.

Administrative History of the Senate.—During 2004, the assistant historian continued the research and writing of this historical account of the Senate's administrative evolution, taking advantage of newly discovered archival resources and improved search capabilities for contents of nineteenth-century newspapers and periodicals. This study traces the development of the offices of the Secretary of the Senate and Sergeant at Arms, considers nineteenth and twentieth-century reform efforts that resulted in reorganization and professionalization of Senate staff, and looks at how the Senate's administrative structure has grown and diversified over the past two centuries.

"Anchor of the Republic: The United States Senate, 1789–2006".—The Office began work on a one-volume illustrated history of the Senate, intended for publication in late 2006. This book will focus on the Senate's unique constitutional responsibilities, the development of its traditions and prerogatives, and the contributions of significant personalities.

Rules of the United States Senate, 1774–1979.—This work in progress will present a narrative history of the evolution of the Senate's standing rules, from their antecedents in the Continental Congress through their most recent recodification in 1979. Following the narrative section, a documentary section will include the original text of all standing rules, beginning with those the Senate adopted on April 16, 1789. It will reprint each of the seven subsequent recodifications (1806, 1820, 1828, 1868, 1877, 1884, and 1979) along with changes adopted between each recodification. Appendices will contain rules of the Continental Congresses, the Senate of the Confederate States of America, and the abandoned joint rules of Congress.

Member Services

Members' Records Management and Disposition Assistance.—The Senate archivist continued to assist members' offices with planning for the preservation of their permanently valuable records, with special emphasis on archiving electronic information from computer systems and transferring valuable records to a home state repository. The archivist updated the archival sections of the handbook, "Closing a Senate Office" and participated in meetings with all offices of retiring Senators to plan for the disposition of their records. The archivist worked with staff from all repositories receiving senatorial collections to ensure adequacy of documentation and the transfer of appropriate records with adequate finding aids. The archivist worked with the Committee on Rules and Administration to recommend a change in the source of Senate funding for shipment of members' official records to home-state archival repositories. Public Law 108–447 (December 8, 2004) changed the funding from individual office accounts to the "Miscellaneous Items" appropriations account within the contingent fund of the Senate. The archivist worked with the Sergeant at Arms to develop protocols for the use of an electronic document management system operated by the Office of Printing, Graphics, and Direct Mail. The system is available to all offices for scanning projects and it simultaneously produces a microfilm version suitable for archival preservation purposes. The Historical Office began using the system to produce security copies of its thirty years' accumulation of historical subject files. The archivist identified and worked with three pilot project members' offices to implement its use. The archivist conducted a seminar on records management for Senate offices.

Committee Records Management and Disposition Assistance.—The Senate archivist provided each committee with staff briefings, record surveys, guidance on preservation of information in electronic systems, and instructions for the transfer of permanently valuable records to the National Archives' Center for Legislative Archives. Over 1,365 feet of Senate records were transferred to the Archives. The archivist updated and published *Records Disposition Procedures for Offices of the Secretary of the Senate*. The archival assistant continued to provide processing assistance to committees and administrative offices in need of basic help with noncurrent files. The archival assistant produced committee archiving reports in a database format covering records' transfers for the past five years. The archivist analyzed these reports to provide committees with suggestions for improvements. The archivist also worked with all committees to transfer a set of mark-up transcripts to the Archives for security purposes. The archivist continues revision of the *Records Management Handbook for United States Senate Committees*. Part of the revision entailed developing, with assistance from National Archives (NARA) staff, a protocol for transfer of electronic records to NARA's Center for Legislative Archives. The Committee on Governmental Affairs and its archivist developed and successfully implemented a project using this protocol. In the project, all electronic information pertaining to the development of homeland security legislation was appraised, organized, and sent to the archives.

Senate Historical Minutes.—The Senate historian continued an eight-year series of "Senate Historical Minutes," begun in 1997 at the request of the Senate Democratic Leader. In 2004, the historian prepared and delivered a "Senate Historical Minute" at twenty-four Senate Democratic Conference weekly meetings. These 400-word Minutes were designed to enlighten members about significant events and personalities associated with the Senate's institutional development. More than 200 Minutes are available as a feature on the Senate Web site.

Association of Centers for the Study of Congress.—In May, the Historical Office cosponsored the second annual meeting of the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress in Washington. Among the centers involved in this promising new organization are those associated with the public careers of former Senators Howard Baker, Bob Dole, Everett Dirksen, Margaret Chase Smith, George Aiken, Thomas Dodd, Wendell Ford, Hubert Humphrey, Richard Russell, John Stennis, and John Glenn. The Association elected Senate archivist Karen Paul as its secretary.

Oral History Program

The Historical Office conducts a series of oral history interviews, which provide personal recollections of various Senate careers. This year, oral history interviews were completed with Chuck Ludlam, former staff member of the Separation of Powers Subcommittee; Arthur Rynearson, former deputy Senate Legislative Counsel; and Leonard Weiss, former staff director of the Governmental Affairs Committee. Several other interviews are currently in progress.

Photographic Collections

The photo historian continued to catalog, digitize, and expand the Office's 40,000 item photographic collection. Photos and other images were added to the online collection of Senate Historical Minutes. A photographic exhibition ("Capitol Scenes: 1900–1950") was developed for display on the Capitol's second floor, and a virtual exhibit was created of the same images for the Senate Web site. Working closely with the Senate Curator's Office and the Office of Conservation and Preservation, the photo historian helped to create and mount on the first floor of the Capitol's Senate wing a photographic exhibition entitled "World War II: The U.S. Senate and the Nation's Capital." The office acquired a late 19th and early 20th century collection of scrapbooks containing the photographic images of nearly 900 Senators who served from the Senate's earliest years through the 1920s. The photo historian also began working on a pictorial directory that will include an image of every Senator who has ever served, organized by state and class. This first-of-its-kind publication will offer a unique visual representation of the collective Senate from its beginnings to the present.

Educational Outreach

In coordination with the Joint Office of Education and Training, Historical Office staff provided seminars on the general history of the Senate, Senate committees, women Senators, and Senate floor leadership. Office staff also participated in seminars and briefings for specially scheduled groups. The historian and associate historian joined the Secretary of the Senate in making formal presentations at the June 2004 Institute on Congress and American History at the Lyndon B. Johnson Library and Museum in Austin, Texas. Staff also made several international presentations. The historian addressed the "Parliaments, Representation, and Society Seminar" at the University of London's Institute of Historical Research and the associate historian was a featured speaker at a conference of the International Association of Oral History in Rome, Italy. Finally, on November 19, 2004, C-SPAN's "Washington Journal" devoted an hour-long program to the history of the Senate and the work of the Senate Historical Office.

7. HUMAN RESOURCES

The Office of Human Resources was established in June 1995 as a result of the Congressional Accountability Act. The Office develops and implements human resources policies, procedures, and programs for the Office of the Secretary of the Senate that not only fulfill the legal requirements of the workplace but which complement the organization's strategic goals.

HR's responsibilities include recruiting and staffing; providing guidance to managers and staff; training; job analysis; compensation planning, design, and administration; leave administration; records management; employee handbooks and manuals; internal grievance procedures; employee relations and services; and organizational planning and development.

The Human Resources Office also administers the Secretary's Public Transportation Subsidy program and the Summer Intern Program that offers college students the opportunity to gain valuable skills and experience in a variety of Senate support offices.

Ongoing projects for 2005

Classification and Compensation Review Completed

HR conducted a complete classification and compensation study. The classification study included a comprehensive collection of current job classifications and specifications for every position in the Office. For 2005 and beyond, HR will for maintain and update the entire system.

Policies and Procedures

The Secretary, through HR, will update and revise the Employee Handbook of the Office of the Secretary. With nuances in employment law and other advances, the policies will be reviewed, coordinated with counsel (if necessary), revised and updated annually.

In regard to potential violations for said procedures, the Secretary, through HR and the Senate Chief Counsel for Employment, has developed an effective method to coordinate inquiries.

Employee Self-Service (ESS)

HR has implemented use of the Employee Self-Service system (ESS) which is a secure system enabling Secretary staff to review and update personnel information pertaining to addresses, phone numbers and emergency contact information. Employees are now able to review and correct information to their electronic personnel records kept by HR. Staff and managers can also access leave records and reports through this system. The ability to review and update this information is instrumental to maintain accurate contact lists for emergencies or other contingencies.

New Leave Tracking System

In the past, employees of the Secretary of the Senate had to maintain "timesheets" for each day of work throughout the year. This system was maintained by each employee and signed off on by the supervisor and/or department head. HR created a new leave tracking system whereby attendance is only recorded by the exception, or absence. Leave slips have been created for staff to complete and submit prior to needing to take leave. The supervisor approves the request and forwards it to HR to be entered into the system. Staff now have access to their leave balance which is maintained by HR. As a result of this new tracking system, directors and HR are able to generate a multitude of reports to analyze leave usage by department and organization-wide and to review leave balances.

Attraction and Retention of Staff

HR has the ongoing task of advertising new vacancies or positions, screening applicants, interviewing candidates and assisting with all phases of the hiring process.

Outreach

HR has initiated development of an Elder Care Fair that will be available for all Senate staff interested in learning more about local and nationwide services available to assist the elderly and those responsible for their care. HR is working closely with the Senate Office of Education and Training and the Employee Assistance Program to identify and contact agencies that may be of assistance to Senate staff. The goal is to conduct this one day event in the last quarter of 2005.

Training

In conjunction with the Senate Chief Counsel for Employment, HR has worked on preparing training for department heads and staff. The training topics include Conducting Background Checks, Providing Feedback to Employees and Goal Setting. These skills will further enhance the ability to our staff to comply and succeed in the development of the staff of the Secretary of the Senate.

Orienting New Staff

Because first impressions make such a lasting impression, HR has developed a new consistent means of orienting new staff joining the Office of the Secretary. This new system allows for a seamless transition from the orientation of HR, policies, parking, and metro subsidy, to the particular department the staff member is joining.

Interns and Fellows

HR has been instrumental in the internship program and coordination of the Heinz Fellowship program. The next group of summer interns will begin in June 2005.

Employee Feedback and Development

A key to maintaining and improving performance standards, as well as ensuring completion of organizational objectives, is providing employee feedback. HR, in conjunction with the Executive Office and department heads, has established a new comprehensive tool to evaluate staff at all levels of the organization.

8. INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The staff of the Department of Information Systems provides technical hardware and software support for the Office of the Secretary of the Senate. Information Systems staff also work closely with the application and network development groups within the Senate Sergeant at Arms (SAA), the Government Printing Office (GPO), and outside vendors on technical issues and joint projects. The Department provides computer related support for the all LAN-based servers within the Office of the Secretary of the Senate. Information Systems staff provide direct application support for all software installed workstations, initiate and guide new technologies, and implement next generation hardware and software solutions.

Mission Evaluation

The primary mission of the Information Systems Department is to continue to provide the highest level of customer satisfaction and computer support for all departments within the Secretary of the Senate's operation. Emphasis is placed on the creation and transfer of legislation to outside departments and agencies, meeting Disbursing office financial responsibilities to the member offices, and office mandated and statutory obligations.

Functional responsibilities for supporting other departments were expanded, as staffing levels were maintained. Information System staff functionality was expanded by moving the IT structure from a local LAN support structure to an enterprise IT support process. Improved diagnostic practices were adopted to stretch support across all Secretary departments. Several departments, namely Disbursing, Office of Public Records, Chief Counsel for Employment, Page School, Senate Security, and Stationery and Gift Shop have dedicated information technology staff within those offices. Public Records, Stationery, and Gift Shop remote support was added in 2004. Information Systems personnel continue to provide a multi-tiered escalated hardware and software support for these offices.

For information security reasons, Secretary departments implement isolated computer systems, unique applications, and isolated local area networks. The Secretary of the Senate network is a closed local area network to all offices within the Senate. Information Systems staff continue to provide a common level of hardware and software integration for these networks, and for the shared resources of inter-departmental networking. Information System staff continue to actively participate in all new project design and implementation within the Secretary of the Senate operations.

Improvements to the Secretary's LANs

The Senate chose Windows NT as the standard network operating system in 1997. The continuing support strategy is to enhance existing hardware and software support provided by the Information Systems Department, and augment that support with assistance from the SAA whenever required. The Secretary's network supports approximately 300 user accounts and patron accounts in the Capitol, Hart, Russell, Dirksen, and the Page School locations.

Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

The Office of Information System began disaster planning for the Secretary's office in June, 1998. In January, 2001, this planning process had evolved to include other working groups within the Senate . Working with the Office of Senate Security, SAA, GSA, and GAO personnel, the Information System COOP plan was developed in March 2001. Initial emphasis was placed on the continuation of legislative and financial business elements within the Senate.

Beginning in January 2001, new product technology was implemented to migrate and store legislative data off-line. This success of the initial pilot project was used to facilitate solutions in other Secretary offices. The same technology was applied to provide the department of Public Records with off-line storage capabilities in July 2001.

Near-line server storage solutions augment the normal tape archival process. Individual server data continues to be backed up each night. At present snap servers are deployed in key locations and smaller units are located off-site and are rotated on a bimonthly basis.

Fiscal Year 2004 Highlights

1. Active Directory and Message Infrastructure Project (ADMA)

The original plan involved replacing all CC:MAIL servers and gateways with a decentralized Microsoft Outlook solution. The Secretary's office previously had six Post Offices in six different server domains. There was no central Public Address Book for all Secretary employees. Additionally, Secretary Mail requirements needed to be refined to insure the implemented solution was both cost-effective and reliable for the Office of the Secretary.

The Microsoft Outlook E-Mail client solution is referred to as the Messaging Architecture, and the replacement of the existing Windows NT server installed base is referred to as the Active Directory project. The initial plan outlined that all staff employees be enrolled in one central Active Directory Secretary enterprise. Each department (except the Disbursing and Employment Counsel office) is to be structured as a Organizational Unit within the new enterprise. In November 2004, the Office of Employment Counsel migrated to ADMA. Completion of the remaining offices will occur in fiscal year 2005.

2. Office of Public Records (OPR) Upgrades

Upgrades to all OPR hardware and software were implemented in fiscal year 2004. This involved replacing four (4) new servers at the PSQ location, and consolidating all OPR data to a new hardware platform in SH–232. Operating System software was ungraded and Database software was transferred to a Windows2000/SQL2000. During the February ricin event, OPR staff relocated and were able to operate and continue their scanning operation.

3. Senate Library Catalog Project

The existing Senate Library hardware and software server operation in SRB–20 was mirrored to facilitate access to the Library Web Catalog for all Senate offices on the Senate Intranet. Previously only workstations within SOS could access the catalog. Home and state offices can now take advantage of the numerous library resources. The mirrored server operation at another location provides a redundant data backup to the primary Russell location. Future migration of the catalog information to the Storage Area Network (SAN) located at the Alternate Computing Facility is now possible.

4. Legislative Operation Upgrades

The Journal Clerk hardware and software business applications was updated in fiscal year 2004. The previous version of software was last updated in 1997, and this new software application now takes advantage of the LIS repository located at PSQ. Composition of the Senate Journal is more accurate and takes advantage of the internal LIS architecture.

5. Gift Shop Procurement

A search began early in 2002 to investigate and find a solution for a replacement hardware and software system for the Senate Gift Shop and Stationery operations. A procurement was awarded in 2002. New hardware servers and Point-Of-Sale workstations were installed in January 2004, the older POS applications retired, and new system integration completed in February 2004. This is a long-term project which involves the creation of a new product database, an e-commerce point-of-sale application, inventory control software, and Disbursing Office reports generation package.

6. Stationery Room Renovation Procurement

Similar to the Gift Shop renovation project, the Stationery Room awarded a contract to replace the existing business method. This process had not been updated in over ten years. Additional hardware and software was installed in 2004 to support the new point-of-sale system.

In May 2004, an enhancement to the Metro Subsidy system began which would allow Senate offices to request allotted subsidies in advance using a web-browser based connection. SAA provided the web-entry portal and the Secretary installed the necessary SQL database server. An additional hardware server and new workstations were installed in December 2004 to support the PTI solution.

7. Curator Project Management Software

In May 2004, the Curator's office desired a method to more efficiently create, edit, publish, and distribute information relative to numerous contracts and outside vendor projects. After evaluating these business requirements, the IT solution implemented now provides multi-user collaboration software (Groove) to track and monitor these numerous projects. In parallel, working with SAA Research & Development, this solution was deemed valuable to other Senate offices as this package allows staff to communicate and share files regardless of location.

9. INTERPARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

The Office of Interparliamentary Services (IPS) has completed its 23rd year of operation as a department of the Secretary of the Senate. IPS is responsible for administrative, financial, and protocol functions for all interparliamentary conferences in which the Senate participates by statute, for interparliamentary conferences in which the Senate participates on an ad hoc basis, and for special delegations authorized by the Majority and/or Minority Leaders. The office also provides appropriate assistance as requested by other Senate delegations.

The statutory interparliamentary conferences are: NATO Parliamentary Assembly; Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Group; Canada-United States Interparliamentary Group; British-American Interparliamentary Group; United States-Russia Interparliamentary Group; and United States-China Interparliamentary Group.

In June, the 45th Annual Meeting of the Canada-U.S. Interparliamentary Group was held in Idaho. Arrangements for this successful event were handled by the IPS staff.

As in previous years, all foreign travel authorized by the Leadership is arranged by the IPS staff. In addition to delegation trips, IPS provided assistance to individual Senators and staff traveling overseas. Senators and staff authorized by committees for foreign travel continue to call upon this office for assistance with passports, visas, travel arrangements, and reporting requirements.

IPS receives and prepares for printing the quarterly financial reports for foreign travel from all committees in the Senate. In addition to preparing the quarterly reports for the Majority Leader, the Minority Leader, and the President Pro Tempore, IPS staff also assist staff members of Senators and committees in filling out the required reports.

Interparliamentary Services maintains regular contact with the Office of the Chief of Protocol, Department of State, and with foreign embassy officials. Official foreign visitors are frequently received in this office and assistance is given to individuals as well as to groups by the IPS staff. The staff continues to work closely with other offices of the Secretary of the Senate and the Sergeant at Arms in arranging programs for foreign visitors. In addition, IPS is frequently consulted by individual Senators' offices on a broad range of protocol questions. Occasional questions come from state officials or the general public regarding Congressional protocol.

On behalf of the Leadership, the staff arranges receptions in the Senate for Heads of State, Heads of Government, Heads of Parliaments, and parliamentary delegations. Required records of expenditures on behalf of foreign visitors under authority of Public Law 100–71 are maintained in the Office of Interparliamentary Services.

Planning is underway for the 44th Annual Meeting of the Mexico-U.S. Interparliamentary Group, and the second meetings of both the U.S.-Russia Interparliamentary Group and the U.S.-China Interparliamentary Group, all of which will be held in the United States in 2005. Advance work, including site inspection, will be undertaken for the 46th Annual Canada-U.S. Interparliamentary Group meeting to be held in the United States in 2006. Preparations are also underway for the spring and fall sessions of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

10. LIBRARY

The Senate Library provides legislative, legal, business, and general information services to the United States Senate. The library's collection encompasses legislative documents that date from the Continental Congress in 1774; current and historic executive and judicial branch materials; and an extensive book collection on American politics, history, and biography. Other resources include a wide array of on-line systems used to provide nonpartisan, confidential, timely, and accurate information services to the Senate. The library also authors content for three Web sites: Legislative Information Service, Senate.gov, and Webster.

Notable Achievements

Senate Library catalog available to all Senate staff via Webster.
Web inquiries increased 73 percent and overall inquiries increased 61 percent.
Final design requirements for the off-site storage facility submitted to SAA.
Adjourn time and vote information added to Floor Schedule on Senate.gov.

Information Services

Research

Legal, legislative, business, and general research is the library's primary mission. The complexity of research requests may require several hours of staff time and numerous resources, while working under strict deadlines. While these request totals are fewer than the Web-based inquiries, they dominate daily library activity. This year the library answered 33,750 research inquiries that resulted in the delivery of 3,265 information packages. Activities supporting research requests included 2,747 faxes, 156,891 photocopies, and 6,945 pages printed from the microform collection. The library also loaned 2,165 books and congressional documents to Senate offices. In addition, 371 Senate staff established new borrowing accounts, bringing total accounts to 2,754.

These research skills are critical in the librarians' ability to author material for three different Web sites. Since the 2002 redesign of senate.gov—the Senate's official public Internet site—the librarians have also become essential content providers, organizational consultants, and text editors. The 73 percent increase in visitors to library-authored online resources underscores the library's role in creating and delivering quality information products on the Web.

Traditional inquires—which are telephone, fax, walk-in, and e-mail inquiries—plus visitors to library-authored Web resources increased total requests by 61 percent over last year.

TABLE 1.—SENATE LIBRARY INQUIRY HISTORY, 2000 TO 2004

[Traditional Requests and Visitors to Library-Authored Web Information]

Year(s)	Category		
	Traditional Phone, Fax, E-mail & Walk-in	Web See Table 2 for details	Total
2004	33,750	602,236	635,986
2003	46,234	348,198	394,432
2000–2002 Average	38,660	2,003	40,663

Senate.gov

The Senate Library's mission includes providing accurate, timely, and professionally organized information about the U.S. Senate on Senate.gov—the most widely read publication authored by the Office of the Secretary. The librarians' expert knowledge of the legislative process and sophisticated research skills are used to develop, customize, and deliver meaningful and relevant information. They are able to tailor information to meet the needs of various Web audiences and they possess the critical skills required to provide organized and meaningful content.

Senate.gov accomplishments for 2004:

—The Floor Schedule posted on the home page was enhanced this year by including the adjournment time and a link to the day's recorded votes, an expansion of the library's original 2003 mandate to publish the convene time and the Senate's daily program. Prior to nightly posting of the interactive Schedule, Senate staff were solely dependent upon cloakroom recorded messages.

—Librarians designed Statistics & Lists to provide easy access to more than 80 lists of Senate information, including 28 that detail senatorial biography and service records. Librarians created a subject arrangement for quick access to the varied lists. Topics range from Active Legislation (subject-organized research aids providing bill numbers), to Senators who have cast more than 10,000 votes, to books about art and architecture in the U.S. Capitol.

—Librarians researched and designed an historically important page featuring links to the final Résumé of Congressional Activity for each year since the Résumé was created in 1947. To maintain currency, the latest monthly Résumé is posted upon publication in the Congressional Record. Web designers for both LIS and THOMAS—the public site for legislative status information—quickly adopted the senate.gov Résumé page to enhance their existing content.

The library's Web experience benefits offices under the Secretary needing to publish Internet information. The library designed a page for Senate Printing and Document Services that provides location, hours, and contact information, including an e-mail address for public document requests. The page also includes links to guides on identifying bill numbers and online texts of legislation, and provides definitions of the various categories of legislation. Librarians also coordinate with several Secretary's offices in the posting of monthly senate.gov articles, which complement Senate business. For instance, presidential cabinet nominations or an article announcing the *United States Senate Catalogue of Fine Art*, was prominently featured for Web visitors.

The importance of long-range planning to meet the rapidly changing technical environment was the subject of a series of senate.gov vision meetings conducted this year. The meetings focused on four topics: the value of a taxonomy for site organization and content access; developing a structured workflow and standard editing style; acquiring appropriate software; and designating staff to support the expanding Web responsibilities.

TABLE 2.—SENATE.GOV AND LIS VISITORS TO LIBRARY RESOURCES IN 2004

	Visitors
Active Legislation on Senate.gov	213,014
Reference homepage on Senate.gov	281,836
Virtual Reference Desk on Senate.gov	86,637
Hot Bills List on LIS	11,363
Appropriations Tables, Fiscal Year 1987–2005 on LIS	9,386
TOTAL	602,236

Legislative Information System (LIS)

The Legislative Information System (LIS) serves as a gateway to electronic resources critical to the work of legislative branch staff. The Senate Library serves on an editorial committee with Congressional Research Service (CRS) staff tasked to meet the constantly changing information needs of legislative staff. The committee responds to congressional staff needs by adding features, reorganizing and improving content, and enhancing design elements. Among the library's most popular LIS products for Senate staff are the Hot Bills List and Appropriations Tables.

The library is also working on improvements in LIS nomination and treaty chronologies. The project will ensure that all Senate hearing information is fully identified, regardless of when the hearing was conducted. The research and data entry strategies will be determined in 2005.

Webster

A major accomplishment in 2004 was the establishment of Senate-wide access to the online library catalog via Webster—the Senate's Intranet—which required a coordinated effort by staff from the Office of the Secretary, the Sergeant at Arms, and the catalog vendor. On-site installation and reliability testing of the catalog began in January. The server was transferred to Postal Square in July, where subsequent security testing was completed before the October 25, 2004 official release. The catalog provides staff with desktop access to more than 158,000 bibliographic records. These records include legislative materials dating from the 19th century, executive and judicial branch documents, and more than 35,000 books on the Senate, American history, politics, political biography, and legislative issues. Staff may request same-day book delivery via a catalog link. The catalog also provides full-text electronic access to selected congressional hearings, executive branch documents, and periodicals.

The Webster home page announcement feature was successfully used to promote service seminars, National Library Week events, and the release of the library catalog. More than 150 staff attended the Webster-announced events.

Instructional Services

The Information Services team serves as the Search Help Desk for the Front Page on Webster. Front Page is an information gateway to commercial databases such as LexisNexis, Westlaw, ProQuest, Leadership Directories, Congressional Quarterly, Bureau of National Affairs, National Journal, Federal Document Clearinghouse, Associated Press, and Reuters. This responsibility requires that each librarian maintain expert search skills and the ability to instruct staff in the use of these electronic resources.

Library staff, in conjunction with the Joint Office of Education and Training (JOET), provide monthly LIS training sessions in which Senate staff are instructed in the latest electronic research strategies. Students learn efficient LIS search strategies for the Congressional Record, bill summary and status reports, roll call votes, and committee actions. As the LIS Help Desk, the library continues staff training by answering content and search strategy questions and providing personalized instruction. The JOET also requested the library's assistance in developing a survey to determine the best strategies for delivering information to Senate staff.

Public Relations

The library hosted 25 public relations events in 2004, including "Services of the Senate Library" seminars, new staff and state staff orientations, Senate Page School seminars, and a Secretary of the Senate "block party." The library also provided tours to several visiting groups, including Catholic University, University of Maryland, University of North Carolina, federal librarians, GPO staff, and a delegation from Japan.

Technical Services

Acquisitions

The library received 11,553 new acquisitions in 2004. Of this number, 7,523 were congressional documents, 3,314 were executive or judicial publications, and the remaining 716 items were books related to politics, American history, or biography. There were several major acquisitions in 2004, including 127 bound volumes of Senate and House bills from the 107th Congress; a 42-volume reprint of the Annals of Congress, containing the congressional debates from 1789–1824; and a significant portion of the 28 volumes of the John C. Calhoun papers.

As a participant in the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP), the library receives categories of legislative and executive and judicial branch publications from the Government Printing Office (GPO). In 2004, the library received 3,314 items through FDLP. The trend to distribute government publications electronically has significantly reduced the number of paper documents issued. GPO reports that 86 percent of new government documents will only be distributed electronically. The library responded by adding more than 8,300 government document links to the online catalog. The links provide Senate staff with immediate desktop access to the materials.

A major project is the ongoing review of the items received through FDLP. During this fourth year of the project, 2,031 items were withdrawn from the collection and 1,660 (79 percent) of the items were donated to requesting federal libraries. The project's final phase improves document access by integrating executive branch documents with other collections under a single library classification system. This year the cataloging staff reclassified and integrated 326 government documents.

The library's acquisitions committee meets monthly to review and approve all book purchases. The committee is composed of the Librarian, two reference librarians, and the acquisitions librarian. Library staff make recommendations to the committee through a Web-based selection tool that allows staff to suggest titles for possible purchase.

Cataloging

The library's highly productive cataloging staff draws on years of experience to produce and maintain a catalog of 158,111 items. During the year, 8,172 items were added to the catalog and an overall 8 percent increase in titles cataloged was realized.

Cataloging efforts in 2004 focused on historic treaties, Senate executive reports, and older Senate hearings. In many instances, the Senate's collection holds the only known copy of the document. This work contributed to a 33 percent increase over the previous year in cataloging historic material. As a result, the library contributed

636 new personal and treaty name records through the Name Authorities Cooperative program (NACO), a total that exceeds that of many larger institutions. The privilege to participate in NACO recognizes the professional expertise of the library's catalogers.

Offsite Storage and Collection Maintenance

A warehouse facility, scheduled for completion in 2005, will provide the Senate with permanent, well-designed offsite storage. The facility will meet the library's long-term need to preserve the Senate's archival collections. The warehouse will provide storage for 50,000 volumes, security and fire suppression, museum-standard humidity and temperature control, and air filtration. An archive of 20,000 historic and rare congressional documents is scheduled for the initial transfer to the warehouse. To meet Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) requirements, the warehouse will have access to the Senate network and telecommunications systems. Space for collections and equipment belonging to the Historical Office and Office of Conservation and Preservation will also be provided.

An important preservation project in 2004 involved 19th century editions of the *Annals of Congress*—the official record of congressional debate from 1789–1824. Multiple sets were carefully examined to identify the best candidates for preservation. The selected sets were cleaned, wrapped, boxed, and labeled for eventual rebinding. Another aspect of collection maintenance is binding contemporary materials for permanent retention. These materials include the Congressional Record, Federal Register, and committee publications. In 2004, five shipments of 685 volumes were processed for binding at GPO.

Administrative

Budget

Budget reductions in 2004 totaled $11,009.52. Eight years of aggressive budget monitoring has resulted in reductions totaling $70,940.37. Continual review of purchases has eliminated materials that do not meet the Senate's current information needs. This oversight is also critical in offsetting cost increases for core materials and for acquiring new materials. The goal is to provide the highest service level using the latest technologies and best resources in the most cost-effective way.

Professional Staff Development

During 2004, Library staff participated in 124 training sessions, workshops, conferences, tours, and professional development seminars. The emphasis on continuing education and training is necessary to maintain and upgrade skill levels, particularly in the ever-changing field of technology. In addition to classes on news and legal databases, staff attended technical training sessions that included Web design, Internet research, taxonomy construction, cataloging techniques, and book preservation. Senior staff also conducted several review sessions on the application of cataloging rules.

Library staff toured the Senate Page School, the National Archives, and several Library of Congress divisions including Maps, Photographs and Prints, Loan, and Recorded Sound. Staff also attended several professional conferences including Computers in Libraries, Federal Depository Library, and the American Association of Law Libraries.

Unum, Newsletter of the Office of the Secretary of the Senate

Unum staff coordinated a photo of the entire Secretary's staff, the first since April 1994. The photo was published in the Autumn 2004 issue. The Secretary's quarterly newsletter, produced by Senate Library staff since May 2000, is a continued success. With distribution to approximately 1,200 readers, Unum serves as an historic record of accomplishments, events, and personnel in the Office of the Secretary of the Senate.

Major Library Goals for 2005

Acquire an XML editing tool for Web publishing.
Implement an organizational structure for the library's home page on Webster.
Complete integration of library resources onto the Secretary's network.
Implement an LIS standard for committee hearing data entry.
Transfer 20,000 volumes to the new warehouse.

SENATE LIBRARY STATISTICS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2004—ACQUISITIONS

	Books		Government Documents		Congressional Publications				Total
	Ordered	Received	Paper	Fiche	Hearings	Prints	Bylaw	Reports/ Docs	
January	25	67	275	103	192	15	74	113	839
February	5	30	176	76	204	14	68	112	680
March	20	69	243	103	313	25	208	202	1,163
1st Quarter	50	166	694	282	709	54	350	427	2,682
April	14	70	171	56	212	15	138	292	954
May	33	75	167	0	334	27	88	158	849
June	18	51	151	6	331	20	119	192	870
2nd Quarter	65	196	489	62	877	62	345	642	2,673
July	16	62	237	0	281	32	77	295	984
August	12	37	134	166	392	23	80	316	1,148
September	15	42	222	242	233	14	61	354	1,168
3rd Quarter	43	141	593	408	906	69	218	965	3,300
October	15	90	160	43	203	10	115	289	910
November	30	66	173	80	252	16	75	343	1,005
December	22	57	220	110	233	6	68	289	983
4th Quarter	67	213	553	233	688	32	258	921	2,898
2004 Total	225	716	2,329	985	3,180	217	1,171	2,955	11,553
2003 Total	355	1,034	2,484	992	3,171	266	596	3,155	11,698
Percent Change	−36.62	−30.75	−6.24	−0.71	+0.28	−18.42	+96.48	−6.34	−1.24

SENATE LIBRARY STATISTICS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2004—CATALOGING

	S. Hearing Numbers Added to LIS	Bibliographic Records Cataloged						Total Records Cataloged
		Books	Government Documents		Congressional Publications			
			Paper	Fiche	Hearings	Prints	Docs./Pubs.	
January	21	97	5	0	327	7	20	456
February	39	16	1	0	188	108	60	373
March	12	22	5	0	393	2	60	482
1st Quarter	72	135	11	0	908	117	140	1,311
April	2	32	6	1	221	6	45	311
May	15	30	4	0	267	0	65	366
June	5	33	2	0	284	19	65	403
2nd Quarter	22	95	12	1	772	25	175	1,080
July	3	24	8	0	338	2	35	407
August	26	28	5	8	187	6	21	255
September	24	81	5	0	277	4	75	442
3rd Quarter	53	133	18	8	802	12	131	1,104
October	17	23	9	9	385	0	60	486
November	67	21	28	7	186	7	69	318
December	9	18	10	16	276	3	87	410
4th Quarter	93	62	47	32	847	10	216	1,214
2004 Total	240	425	88	41	3,329	164	662	4,709
2003 Total	221	618	159	81	2,713	490	294	4,355
Percent Change	+8.60	−31.23	−44.65	−49.38	+22.71	−66.53	+125.17	+8.13

SENATE LIBRARY STATISTICS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2004—DOCUMENT DELIVERY

	Volumes Loaned	Materials Delivered	Fac-similes	Micro-graphics Center Pages Printed	Photo-copiers Pages Printed
January	125	219	173	523	5,128
February	148	227	81	421	6,320
March	222	376	260	599	9,834
1st Quarter	495	822	514	1,543	21,282
April	152	288	160	318	11,705
May	210	283	158	143	8,444
June	195	308	208	707	12,818
2nd Quarter	557	879	526	1,168	32,967
July	193	322	235	640	5,435
August	179	260	112	275	9,588
September	215	240	175	225	8,009
3rd Quarter	587	822	522	1,140	23,032
October	220	241	112	146	7,983
November	168	259	112	323	7,250
December	138	242	118	202	7,122
4th Quarter	526	742	342	671	22,355
2004 Total	2,165	3,265	1,904	4,522	99,636
2003 Total	1,664	4,078	2,747	6,945	156,891
Percent Change	+30.11	−19.94	−30.69	−34.89	−36.49

11. SENATE PAGE SCHOOL

The United States Senate Page School exists to provide a smooth transition from and to the students' home schools, providing those students with as sound a program, both academically and experientially, as possible during their stay in the nation's capital, within the limits of the constraints imposed by the work situation.

Summary of Accomplishments

Accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Secondary Schools continues until December 31, 2008.

Two page classes successfully completed their semester curriculum. Closing ceremonies were conducted on June 4, 2004, and January 14, 2005, the last day of school for each semester.

Orientation and course scheduling for the Spring 2004 and Fall 2004 pages were successfully completed. Needs of incoming students determined the semester schedules.

Extended educational experiences were provided to pages. Twenty-one field trips, two guest speakers, opportunities to compete in writing and speaking contests, to play musical instruments and vocalize, and to continue foreign language study with the aid of tutors of four languages were all afforded pages. Nine field trips to educational sites were provided for summer pages as an extension of the page experience. National tests were administered for qualification in scholarship programs as well.

Effective and efficient communication and coordination among SAA, Secretary, Party Secretaries, Page Program, and Page School continues.

The community service project embraced by pages and staff in 2002 continues. Items for gift packages were collected, assembled, and shipped to military personnel in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the USO in Frankfurt, Germany where distribution of the boxes to troops en route to war zones take place. Pages included letters of support to the troops serving in Operation Enduring Freedom. Several recipients of gift packages wrote letters to Pages expressing appreciation.

The evacuation and COOP plans have been reviewed and updated. Pages and staff continue to practice evacuating to primary and secondary sites.

Staff and pages participated in escape hood training.

Tutors were trained in evacuation procedures.

Updated materials/equipment were purchased. These included math software, ten graphing calculators, supplemental English textbooks, a chemistry textbook, and three pieces of equipment to provide for computer experiments in science.

Faculty have pursued learning opportunities. The entire faculty and principal attended a Learning and the Brain conference. Michael Bowers, history instructor, participated in a seminar conducted in Williamsburg, VA: "The Unpleasantness in the Colonies: The American Revolution From A British Perspective." Raymond Cwalina, math instructor, completed three graduate courses in mathematics and attended an Advanced Placement calculus seminar. He also attended the regional and national conventions of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

Facility re-design to maximize space was completed.

Upgrading science laboratory equipment was accomplished which allows computer labs to be performed and reduces quantities of supplies used.

Summary of Plans

Our goals include:

—Individualized small group instruction and tutoring by teachers on an as-needed basis will continue to be offered.

—Foreign language tutors will provide instruction in French, Spanish, German, and Latin.

—The focus of field trips will be sites of historic, political, and scientific importance which complement the curriculum.

—Staff development options will include attendance at a technology conference, seminars conducted by the Joint Office of Education and Training, and subject matter conferences conducted by national organizations.

—The community service project will continue.

12. PRINTING AND DOCUMENT SERVICES

The Office of Printing and Document Services (OPDS) serves as liaison to the Government Printing Office (GPO) for the Senate's official printing, ensuring that all Senate printing is in compliance with Title 44, U.S. Code as it relates to Senate documents, hearings, committee prints and other official publications. The office assists the Senate by coordinating, scheduling, delivering and preparing Senate legislation, hearings, documents, committee prints and miscellaneous publications for printing, and provides printed copies of all legislation and public laws to the Senate and the public. In addition, the office assigns publication numbers to all hearings, committee prints, documents and other publications; orders all blank paper, envelopes and letterhead for the Senate; and prepares page counts of all Senate hearings in order to compensate commercial reporting companies for the preparation of hearings.

Printing Services

During fiscal year 2004, the OPDS prepared 4,515 printing and binding requisitions authorizing the GPO to print and bind the Senate's work, exclusive of legislation and the Congressional Record. Since the requisitioning done by the OPDS is central to the Senate's printing, the office is uniquely suited to perform invoice and bid reviewing responsibilities for Senate printing. As a result of this office's cost accounting duties, OPDS reviews and assures accurate GPO invoicing and plays an active role in providing the best possible bidding scenario for Senate publications.

In addition to processing requisitions, the Printing Services Section coordinates proof handling and job scheduling and tracking for stationery products, Senate hearings, Senate publications and other miscellaneous printed products, as well as monitoring blank paper and stationery quotas for each Senate office and committee. The OPDS also coordinates a number of publications for other Senate offices, from the Curator, Historian, Disbursing, Legislative Clerk, and Senate Library to the U.S. Botanic Garden, U.S. Capitol Police and Architect of the Capitol. These tasks include providing guidance for design, paper selection, and specifications for quotations, monitoring print quality and distribution. Last year's major printing projects included the Report of the Secretary of the Senate, the Semiannual Report of the Architect of the Capitol and a variety of printed materials required for the Presidential Inauguration including invitations, parking passes, maps, tickets and signage. The office also provided guidance and informational packets for new Senate office staff. Current major projects for the office include a full color version of the "History of the U.S. Botanic Garden 1861–1991" and the "U.S. Senate Catalogue of

Graphic Art" a companion volume to the fine art catalogue produced by the Senate Curator's office in 2003.

Hearing Billing Verification

Senate committees often use outside reporting companies to transcribe their hearings, both in-house and in the field. The OPDS processes billing verifications for these transcription services ensuring that costs billed to the Senate are accurate.

During 2004, OPDS provided commercial reporting companies and corresponding Senate committees a total of 787 billing verifications of Senate hearings and business meetings. This translated to an average of 41.4 hearings/meetings per committee, an eight percent decrease from 2003, typical of an election year. Over 56,000 transcribed pages were processed at a total billing cost of approximately $367,000.

The OPDS utilizes a program developed in conjunction with the Senate Sergeant at Arms Computer Division that provides more billing accuracy and greater information gathering capacity, and adheres to the guidelines established by the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration for commercial reporting companies to bill the Senate for transcription services. During 2004 the office reached its goal of increasing efficiency and accuracy by processing all file transfers between committees and reporting companies electronically. Department staff continue training to apply today's expanding digital technology to improve performance and services.

HEARING TRANSCRIPT AND BILLING VERIFICATIONS

	2002	2003	2004	Percent change 2004/2003
Billing Verifications	953	975	787	−8.0
Average per Committee	50	51.3	41.4	−8.0
Total Transcribed Pages	71,558	70,532	56,262	−8.0
Average Pages/Committee	3,766	3,712	2,961	−8.0
Transcribed Pages Cost	$471,807	$461,807	$366,904	−8.0
Average Cost/Committee	$24,832	$24,288	$19,311	−8.0

Additionally, the Service Center within the OPDS is staffed by experienced GPO detailees that provide Senate committees and the Secretary of the Senate's Office with complete publishing services for hearings, committee prints, and the preparation of the Congressional Record. These services include keyboarding, proofreading, scanning, and composition. The Service Center provides the best management of funds available through the Congressional Printing and Binding Appropriation because committees have been able to decrease or eliminate additional overtime costs associated with the preparation of hearings.

Document Services Distribution, Inventory & On Demand Publication

The Document Services Section coordinates requests for printed legislation and miscellaneous publications with other departments within the Secretary's Office, Senate committees, and the GPO. This section ensures that the most current version of all material is available, and that sufficient quantities are available to meet projected demands. The Congressional Record, a printed record of Senate and House floor proceedings, Extension of Remarks, Daily Digest and miscellaneous pages, is one of the many printed documents provided by the office on a daily basis.

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD STATISTICS

	2002	2003	2004
Pages Printed:			
For the Senate	14,489	16,835	12,642
For the House	15,201	16,259	14,243
Total Pages Printed	29,690	33,094	26,885
Copies Printed & Distributed:			
To the Senate	439,953	307,917	227,192
To the House	301,383	441,735	331,165
To the Executive Branch and the Public	532,813	449,750	323,957
Total Copies Printed & Distributed	1,268,603	1,199,402	882,314

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD STATISTICS—Continued

	2002	2003	2004
Production Costs:			
Senate Costs	$6,339,539	$9,886,805	$7,961,741
House Costs	$6,609,307	$9,563,592	$9,026,893
Other	$539,535	$693,141	$555,010
Total Production Costs	$13,488,381	$20,143,538	$17,543,644
Costs Per Copy Cost	$12.14	$16.79	$19.88

Although accessing legislative documents through the Internet is popular, there is still a strong need for printed documents, especially for larger sized legislation like the omnibus conference reports. The OPDS continually tracks demand for all classifications of congressional legislation and twice yearly adjusts the number of documents ordered in each category to closely match demand. Document waste has decreased significantly over the past several years.

The office supplements depleted legislative documents where needed by producing additional copies in the DocuTech Service Center which is staffed by experienced GPO detailees that provide Member offices and Senate committees with on-demand printing and binding of bills and reports. In March 2004, the office coordinated the installation of a new and improved DocuTech high speed digital copier and production publisher. This machine helps to decrease the quantities of documents printed directly from GPO and increases the ability to reprint documents on-demand on a larger scale. In 2004, the DocuTech Center produced 471 tasks for a total of 660,554 printed pages. The DocuTech is networked with GPO allowing print files to be sent back and forth electronically, which provides an advantage of quickly printing necessary legislation for the Senate floor and other offices in the event of a GPO COOP situation.

The primary responsibility of the Documents Services Section is to provide services to the Senate. However, the responsibility and this office's dedication and assistance to the general public, the press, and other government agencies is virtually indistinguishable from the services provided to the Senate. Requests for material are received at the walk-in counter, through the mail, by fax, and online. In addition, the office handled over 20,000 phone calls in 2004 pertaining to document requests and legislative questions. Recorded messages, fax, and e-mail operate around the clock and are processed as they are received along with mail requests. The office stresses prompt, courteous and accurate answers to the various public and Senate requests.

SUMMARY OF ANNUAL CUSTOMER SERVICE STATISTICS

Calendar year	Congress/session	Public mail	FAX request	E-mail	Counter request
2002	107/2nd	3,637	1,866	662	55,930
2003	108/1st	1,469	2,596	735	53,040
2004	108/2nd	1,137	2,229	564	36,780

On-line Ordering

The past year has brought significant changes in providing new services and improving existing ones. In 2004 many more Senate offices have taken advantage of the on-line blank paper ordering system implemented in 2003. With help from the Secretary's Office of Web Technology Department, OPDS expanded its content on senate.gov including new links to other sources of legislative information. The ability to order documents on-line, once reserved for staff only, has been opened for public use. The Legislative Hot List Link, where Members and staff can confirm arrival of printed copies of the most sought after legislative documents is still very popular. The site is updated several times daily—each time new documents arrive from GPO in the Document Room. The Office of Printing and Document Services continues to seek new ways to use technology to assist Members and staff with added services and improved access to information.

13. OFFICE OF PUBLIC RECORDS

The Office of Public Records receives, processes, and maintains records, reports, and other documents filed with the Secretary of the Senate involving the Federal Election Campaign Act, as amended; the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995; the Senate Code of Official Conduct: Rule 34, Public Financial Disclosure; Rule 35, Senate Gift Rule filings; Rule 40, Registration of Mass Mailing; Rule 41, Political Fund Designees; and Rule 41(6), Supervisor's Reports on Individuals Performing Senate Services; and Foreign Travel Reports.

The office provides for the inspection, review, and reproduction of these documents. From October 2003, through September 2004, the Public Records office staff assisted more than 2,000 individuals seeking information from reports filed with the office. Additional assistance was provided by telephone, and given to lobbyists attempting to comply with the provisions of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995. A total of 93,655 photocopies was sold in the period. In addition, the office works closely with the Federal Election Commission, the Senate Select Committee on Ethics and the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives concerning filing requirements.

Fiscal Year 2004 Accomplishments

The Public Records office revised and improved the lobbying pages on senate.gov based upon recommendations of an independent survey of North American disclosure web sites. The office also completed transition to the next generation of server hardware. During the ricin incident, the office COOP plan was activated and operational in three hours.

Plans for Fiscal Year 2005

The office intends to develop on-site redundancy in conjuncture with other offices under the Office of the Secretary that have scanning functions. The office also plans to modernize the on-site public access software.

Automation Activities

During fiscal year 2004, the Senate Office of Public Records automated the Foreign Travel Reports filed under the Mutual Security Act of 1954. This is the first time that these records have been automated. The value to the Senate is that in the event of a COOP activation, they become easily accessible off-site.

Federal Election Campaign Act, as Amended

The Act requires Senate candidates to file quarterly reports, and pre and post election reports in the case of candidates running for office in 2004. Filings totaled 4,677 documents containing 290,592 pages.

Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995

The Act requires semi-annual financial and lobbying activity reports. As of September 30, 2004, 6,231 registrants represented 19,758 clients and employed 30,402 individuals who met the statutory definition of "lobbyist." The total number of lobbying registrations and reports was 51,496.

Public Financial Disclosure

The filing date for Public Financial Disclosure Reports was May 17, 2004. The reports were available to the public and press by Friday, June 11th. Copies were provided to the Select Committee on Ethics and the appropriate state officials. A total of 2,692 reports and amendments were filed containing 15,695 pages. There were 328 requests to review or receive copies of the documents.

Senate Rule 35 (Gift Rule)

The Senate Office of Public Records has received over 1,392 reports during fiscal year 2004.

Registration of Mass Mailing

Senators are required to file mass mailings on a quarterly basis. The number of pages was 519.

14. SENATE SECURITY

Introduction

The Office of Senate Security (OSS) was established under the Secretary of the Senate by Senate Resolution 243 (100th Congress, 1st Session). The Office is responsible for the administration of classified information security programs in Senate offices and committees. In addition, OSS serves as the Senate's liaison to the Executive Branch in matters relating to the security of classified information in the Senate.

Personnel Security

Five hundred twenty-three Senate employees held one or more security clearances at the end of 2004. This number does not include clearances for employees of the Architect of the Capitol nor does it include clearances for Congressional Fellows assigned to Senate offices. OSS also processes these clearances.

In the past year, OSS processed 1,904 personnel security actions, a 21.3 percent decrease from 2003. One hundred twenty-two investigations for new security clearances were initiated last year, and 61 security clearances were transferred from other agencies. Senate regulations, as well as some Executive Branch regulations, require that individuals granted Top Secret security clearances be reinvestigated at least every five years. Staff holding Secret security clearances are reinvestigated every ten years. During the past year, reinvestigations were initiated on 62 Senate employees. OSS processed 137 routine terminations of security clearances during the reporting period and transmitted 310 outgoing visit requests. The remainder of the personnel security actions consisted of updating access authorizations and compartments.

The length of time required for the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to process Senate staff for security clearances has increased from 207 days to 260 days. The average time for investigations has increased by 25.6 percent relative to 2003. Since the previous increase for 2002 to 2003 was 66.7 percent, this represents a very significant increase in the last two years. The average time for an initial investigation conducted and adjudicated by the Department of Defense (DOD) is 256 days from the date that OSS requests the investigation until the letter from DOD granting the clearance is received in Senate Security. The average time for DOD initial investigations increased 30.6 percent. The periodic reinvestigation process averages 270 days, a increase of 2.7 percent relative to 2003. The average time for an initial investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and adjudicated by DOD is 252 days while the periodic reinvestigation process averages 264 days. The FBI times represent an decrease of 5.6 percent and 29.0 percent respectively.

Two hundred seven records checks were conducted at the request of the FBI. This represents a 4.0 percent increase in records checks completed by OSS.

Security Awareness

OSS conducted or hosted 63 security briefings for Senate staff. Topics included information security, counterintelligence, foreign travel, security managers' responsibilities, office security management, and introductory security briefings. This represents a 20.3 percent decrease from 2003.

Document Control

OSS received or generated 2,802 classified documents consisting of 86,109 pages during calendar year 2003. This is a 5.0 percent increase in the number of documents received or generated in 2003. Additionally, 63,750 pages from 2,670 classified documents no longer required for the conduct of official Senate business were destroyed. This represents an 18.2 percent decrease in destruction. OSS transferred 1,185 documents consisting of 43,970 pages to Senate offices or external agencies, up 57.2 percent from 2003. These figures do not include classified documents received directly by the Appropriations Committee, Armed Services Committee, Foreign Relations Committee, and Select Committee on Intelligence, in accordance with agreements between OSS and those Committees. Overall, Senate Security completed 6,657 document transactions and handled over 193,829 pages of classified material in 2004, a decrease of 0.4 percent.

Secure storage of classified material in the OSS vault was provided for 107 Senators, committees, and support offices. This arrangement minimizes the number of multiple storage areas throughout the Capitol and Senate office buildings, thereby affording greater security for classified material.

Secure Meeting Facilities

OSS secure conference facilities were utilized on 1,145 occasions during 2004. Use of OSS conference facilities decreased 16.7 percent from 2003 levels. Six hundred seventy-three meetings, briefings, or hearings were conducted in OSS' three conference rooms. Of those, nine were "All Senators" briefings and five were hearings. OSS also provided to Senators and staff secure telephones, secure computers, secure facsimile machine, and secure areas for reading and production of classified material on 472 occasions.

15. STATIONERY ROOM

The mission of the Keeper of the Stationery is:
—To sell stationery items for use by Senate offices and other authorized legislative organizations.
—To select a variety of stationery items to meet the needs of the Senate on a day-to-day basis and maintain a sufficient inventory of these items.
—To purchase supplies utilizing open market procurement, competitive bid and/or GSA Federal Supply Schedules.
—To maintain individual official stationery expense accounts for Senators, Committees, and Officers of the Senate.
—To render monthly expense statements.
—To insure receipt of reimbursements for all purchases by the client base via direct payments or through the certification process.
—To make payments to all vendors of record for supplies and services in a timely manner and certify receipt of all supplies and services.
—To provide delivery of purchased supplies to the requesting offices.

	Fiscal Year 2004 Statistical Operations	Fiscal Year 2003 Statistical Operations
Gross Sales	$4,740,221	$4,843,716
Sales Transactions	58,682	61,140
Purchase Orders Issued	6,741	7,545
Vouchers Processed	7,485	8,689
Metro Fare Media Sold	67,836	52,279
$20.00 Media	60,564	46,260
$10.00 Media	4,124	3,023
$5.00 Media	3,148	2,996
Full Time Employees (FTE)	13	13

Fiscal Year 2004 Highlights and Projects

Communications.—The Stationery Room stressed communication with the Administrative Managers Steering Group to keep in touch with the customers' needs.

Flag Modernization Project.—The Stationery Room was tasked to serve on a committee with the other three business unit owners of the flag process. This effort was facilitated by staff of the Senate Sergeant at Arms and a consultant. The consultant was contracted by the SAA to outline all of the processes involved and to identify how each user of the process interacted with the other business unit owners. The consultant was also tasked to make recommendations to streamline the process.

Mass Transit Electronic FORM.—During the first quarter of the fiscal year, the Stationery Room began a pilot project to expedite and streamline the purchase processes of the Mass Transit Subsidy Program. Evolving from the pilot, the concept was to develop a Web-based application that could provide the same functionality and ease of use by the Program Administrators, yet be supported within the Senate community. In cooperation with the SAA IT Development Group, the application was written as a Web-based product. This electronic version is now being deployed through the use of the Senate's intranet server.

Computer Modernization Project.—During the first half of fiscal year 2004, Stationery Room staff spent considerable time working with a consultant to develop a requirements document, to outline the technological needs of the Department in order to move from technology now two decades old to a more robust application. As a result of the requirements document, in May 2004, Stationery Room staff began working with key staff members of the Secretary's Executive Office and the SAA Procurement staff to develop a "Statement of Work" to be used for the Request for Proposal phase and awarding of a contract. In September 2004, a contract was executed to provide software tailored to the needs of the Senate Stationery Room.

Warehouse Project.—The Senate Stationery Room has been involved in this long-term SAA project. The project mission was to determine the warehouse needs by each business user and then find a facility to meet those needs. Current usage, along with future requirements were determined with the assistance of SAA staff and consultants. Additionally, the Stationery Room took the opportunity to factor in COOP requirements that could support this department should a displacement occur.

16. WEB TECHNOLOGY

The Office of Web Technology is responsible for web sites that fall under the purview of the Secretary of the Senate, including: the Senate Web site, www.senate.gov (except individual Senator and Committee pages); the Secretary web site on the Senate intranet, Webster; an intranet site currently used for file-sharing by Secretary staff only; and a LegBranch web server housing web sites and project materials which can be accessed by staff at other Legislative Branch agencies.

Senate Web Site (www.senate.gov)

Senate Web site content is maintained by over 30 contributors from 7 departments of the Secretary's Office and 3 departments of the Sergeant at Arms. Throughout 2004, senate.gov content providers focused on fine-tuning and reorganizing content for usability, based on personal experience and feedback from the public. Collaboration continued throughout the year resulting in the coordinated posting of monthly feature articles in the major areas of the site.

Several new items were added to the site as well, including: A new subsection in the Reference Section called "Statistics & Lists"; the Placement Office web page posting their brochure & employment bulletin; and a collection of several Classic Senate Speeches.

Activities contemplated and/or underway at year's end include: A search feature, already available to Senate offices for use on their own sites; a redesign of the Homepage, bringing additional content up to the front page; several multimedia/animated presentations: The Political Cartoons of Puck—completed and soon to be posted; the Drawings of Lily Spandorf—75 percent complete; and Issac Bassett's papers Senate Desks Redesign and expansion of the Virtual Tour.

The Senate Web site (www.senate.gov) content is managed using the Documentum Web Content Management System which allows content providers to create and post information to the web site without knowing the format language of the web, HTML. The Department of Web Site Technology completed several system-enhancing development projects in 2004.

—Creation of a Java Servlet Page (JSP) Slideshow application
—Development of templates for Statistical Tables
—Authoring in XML—The Cloture Motions Project
—Sending Graphic Art Prints Data to GPO
—Upgrading Documentum 4i to Documentum 5i
—Publishing to Webster from Documentum—the Library Catalogers Project

Below is a description of several projects and how specific problems were solved or the Documentum content management system was enhanced to provide more functionality for the content providers.

JSP Slideshow

The Request: Several offices requested a slideshow application where images could be shown in an effective and interesting manner. The original template was designed for the Inaugural Print Objects the Curator's Office planned to exhibit for the inauguration.

The Solution: All needed objects from the Curator's database were exported into an XML format. Then, using another style sheet, individual XML files and all associated files (five different-sized graphics for each print, and an XML file that contains descriptive information about the graphics and links the graphics to the CMS object) were created. This method was highly effective since it allows the Curator's Office to keep information only in one place and then offers unlimited repurposing of this information by sending the data in an XML format to the Content Management System.

The Slideshow template makes an actual JSP, java servlet page, file that includes all necessary information about the slideshow. This project was the first time JSP technology was used on the Senate's central site, which was recently made possible through the upgrade of the Cold Fusion Application Server. Besides being able to offer users more interaction, and thus a more enjoyable web visit, using JSP technologies was also a proof of concept for using Java through Cold Fusion.

Individual instances of the slideshow template were made for each inauguration in the exhibit, 1853–1905. The Curator's Office can easily modify the data in any part of the exhibit without knowledge of web technologies. The final aspect of this project was to make a slideshow of the slideshows, thus connecting each small slideshow into one large cohesive exhibit. This was done through the modification of the original slideshow template to allow seamless integration as users click through the exhibit.

Moving Forward:

The Curator's Office has already found other uses for the slideshow template, such as a timeline for the unveiling of two portraits in the Senate Reception Room and is now in the midst of an exhibit on Daniel Webster. The slideshow template has been enhanced in several different ways to allow for other purposes. The Historical Office used a simpler version for their Capitol Scenes: 1900–1950, on-line exhibit. The Historical Office also plans to use a slightly modified version of this same template for two upcoming online exhibits.

Many more slideshows will be appearing on the Senate web site through the extension of the JSP Slideshow template.

Examples:

"I Do Solemnly Swear": A Half Century of Inaugural Images http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/art/common/image__collection/inauguration__slideshow.htm

Capitol Scenes: 1900–1950 RLINK"http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/slideshow/capitol__scenes.jsp" http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/slideshow/capitol__scenes.jsp

Vandenburg and Wagner Time Line http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/art/common/slideshow/vandenburg__wagner.jsp

Daniel Webster Objects http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/art/common/slideshow/daniel__webster.jsp

Statistical Tables

The Request: The Senate Library requested a way to post their statistical information online. None of the currently existing templates gave them the control they desired for their information.

The Solution: New content templates were created specifically for tables. These ranged from two-column tables up to seven-column tables that offer controls to the content authors on how the information is displayed. For example, they can choose to have a print friendly version, if the information is applicable, or to include standard header information, which is encapsulated separately and thus reusable, or to display vertical lines to make the information more readable.

This office worked very closely with the Senate Library to make these various table templates work for all their complex information needs. Through XML we are able to offer multiple renditions of the same information for different displays (i.e., viewing online, printing, or pdf formats). This solution greatly appealed to the librarians since it now enables them to update the information in just one file and have all the various presentations of this information updated automatically from their one source file.

Moving Forward:

The Senate Historical Office has plans to begin using these same templates to disseminate some of their data well suited for a table. Additionally, they would like to have more renditions made from the same data source, XML file, such as a rich text format (RTF) for internal use.

The Senate Curator's Office has asked for the same abilities, arranging data in columns for some of their information. Pieces of the program for the original tables have been reused to accomplish their goals.

Examples:

Statistics & Lists Home Page (two-column) http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/two__column__table/stats__and__lists.htm

Measures Proposed to Amend the Constitution (three-column) http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/three__column__table/measures__proposed__to__amend__constitution.htm

Votes by Vice Presidents to Break Tie Votes in the Senate (four-column) http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/four__column__table/Tie__Votes.htm

Sunday Sessions of the Senate (since 1861) (five-column) http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/five__column__table/Sunday__Sessions.htm

George W. Bush Cabinet Nominations (six-column) http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/six__column__table/Bush__cabinet.htm

Inaugural Luncheons (Curator's Office) http://wip.cmsprod.senate.gov/artandhistory/art/common/collection__list/inaugural__luncheons.htm

Authoring in XML—The Cloture Motions Project:

The Request: The Senate Library maintains statistical information on the various Cloture Motions filed during a Congress. This information is very complicated in terms of the special cases that occur with these proceedings. This statistical information is highly sought after and required in several different formats. Due to the complexity of this information none of the previously created table templates would suffice and a new solution was requested.

The Solution: The seven-column table template was used as a base for the cloture motion tables. Using the advances made in the seven-column table we were able to greatly reduce the development time of the cloture motion table template.

One of the major obstacles to overcome was how to fit all the information within the normal width of the screen. We worked very closely with the Library Staff to find a solution acceptable to all. These solutions included using footnotes for certain sections, legends, hyperlinks to measures and bills, and customized codes for indenting and spacing issues. These are highly specialized tables that contain advanced business logic to most accurately display the information in a very useful manner.

Since this information is so useful to a variety of organizations we also enabled the publishing of the XML document directly. This allows other groups to take the data maintained by the Senate librarians and to utilize the data in a manner most efficient for them (i.e., database querying and RSS feeds). Organizations can access this information online, so no files will need to be transferred through other means, and the most current information is always available.

An additional advance accomplished through this project was the authoring of the XML data. Since many cloture motions may exist in a single Congress and each one can contain a great deal of information it became impractical to use the XML editor that came packaged with the Content Management System. We explored several other options for the librarians to edit the data and came up with two solutions that are acceptable to all offices involved.

Moving Forward:

Information that changes often, is displayed in several different formats, and that could possibly be used by other organizations is an excellent candidate for XML technologies. Creating the XML application that delivers Active Legislation/Hot Bills information to www.senate.gov and INK"http://webster"http://webster was a springboard for this application. As content authors experience the reduction of tedious work, updating the same information in many files, more and more of these types of XML applications will prove themselves invaluable. The Library is always adding additional categories of information they maintain that would be enhanced through these applications. Additionally, the Historical Office would like to keep similar information in a rich text format (RTF) to be used by word processors. This is a relatively simple extension of the already existing application.

Examples:

Cloture Motions—108th Congress http://wip.cmsprod.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/cloture__motions/test__108__2.htm

Cloture Motions—108th Congress (Print Version) http://wip.cmsprod.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/cloture__motions/test__108__2.shtml

Cloture Motions—108th Congress (Raw XML Data) http://wip.cmsprod.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/cloture__motions/test__108__2.xml

Graphic Art Prints to GPO

The Request: The Curator's Office needed to provide to the Government Printing Office the information about their graphic art prints for the Senate Graphic Art Catalogue. All information about the graphic art objects is currently maintained in their database. The titles of each one of these objects are very specific and have many styles applied to them inside the database to ensure their proper presentation. Upon exporting this information all the style information was lost and would have needed to be reentered. This opened up the possibility of unnecessary additional work for the Curator.

The Solution: An XML application was developed that was able to preserve the styles of the data, along with all other relevant information. The first step was to export the data into XML. Then, using FileMaker Pro's built-in website functionality, a web page displaying only the object titles was created. Using a product that automates computer keystrokes, a program was written to cycle through each title on the generated website, copying each title to a Word document (still preserving style data), advancing one record, and repeating the process until it traversed through all 1,000 Graphic Print Objects. The Word document containing the titles was converted to an XML file using a third-party product and was merged with the original XML data export, thus producing one XML file with all the style information preserved.

The final XML file was transformed into a word document and a PDF file sent to GPO. Development of this automated conversion process greatly reduced the amount of work that needed to be performed, decreasing the time required to generate the necessary data and improving the quality of the data sent to GPO.

Moving Forward:

Since the Curator's Office uses a FileMaker Pro database, which produces XML reports, this was a great proof of concept of how we can manipulate the data into necessary forms. Some third party software was used due to the complexity of the project, but the knowledge gained of these add-on XML tools will assist toward solving complex formatting and printing needs in the future.

Library Catalogers Publishing to Webster

The Request: The cataloging group in the Senate Library wished to have certain pdf files and graphics of book covers available to the Senate Community. They wanted something that was easy to use and thus did not require much training.

The Solution: We added a new cabinet to the Content Management System just to be used by the catalogers. Next, we created a new web publishing configuration to push the content from the newly created cabinet to the Secretary's portion of http://webster. This required the installation of software on the Webster Server, which we accomplished by working closely with the developers and administrators of that server.

Moving Forward:

Establishing this link between http://webster and our Documentum Content Management System opens up many possibilities for the future. We now could utilize the same system to manage the Secretary's portion of Webster. This would enable non-technical employees to control the information disseminated to Senate Staff without involving a programmer. Additionally we can add more complexity for the catalogers as their needs grow.

Web Site Activity Statistics

Senate Web Site Statistics

In 2003, only 24 percent of visitors to the site saw the main Senate Homepage, the majority coming to the site via a bookmarked page (possibly directly to their Senator's site) or to a specific page from a search engine. That figure rose to 35 percent in 2004, as more people found the main Senate Homepage. Statistics on individual page activity show substantial increases in all areas of the main Senate site.

In 2004 the number of visitors to the entire web site (Senators' and Committees' sites included) increased about 9 percent, however, the number of visitors to the Senate Homepage increased by 57 percent.

Title of Web Page	2003 Visitors/ Month	2004 Visitors/ Month	Percent Increase
Visits—Entire Site	3,029,666	3,293,721	9
Senate Homepage	734,094	1,152,367	57
Senators Home	264,190	273,841	4
Legislation & Records Home	65,904	84,765	29
Committees Home	60,747	73,147	20
Reference Home	20,593	23,486	14
Art & History Home	14,807	20,413	38
Visitors Home	12,095	16,123	33

Reviewing statistics on web page usage help the content providers better understand what information the public is seeking and how best to improve the presentation of that data. The main Senate homepage and the homepages of the six subject areas (buckets) receive the most visits as people navigate around the site (see chart above). Within the buckets we find that visitors are consistently drawn to the following content items, listed in order of popularity.

2004 Top Pages	2003 Visitors/ Month	2004 Visitors/ Month	Percent increase 2003–2004
Roll Call Votes	34,860	39,408	13
Leadership Page	12,789	17,469	37
Active Legislation List	12,311	17,751	44
Session Schedule for 2004	10,121	15,219	50
Organization Chart	11,405	14,140	24
Committee Hearing Schedule	10,552	13,318	26
Bill and Resolutions Page	7,289	12,806	76

2004 Top Pages	2003 Visitors/ Month	2004 Visitors/ Month	Percent increase 2003–2004
Statistics & Lists	....	12,005	([1])
Congressional Record Page	5,247	11,899	127
Virtual Tour of the Capitol	7,335	11,052	51
Individual States Page	5,437	10,139	86
Calendars & Schedules	7,425	10,081	36
Historical Office Page	5,341	9,608	80
Nominations Page	6,682	8,813	32
Virtual Reference Desk	4,561	7,182	57

[1] New in 2004.

Webster Statistics

Statistics for the Secretary's web site on Webster, the Senate Intranet, show that the vast majority of visitors go directly to the Disbursing Office section. This section contains information on Employee Benefits (insurance, retirement, payroll, etc.) and provides access to the many forms employees need to complete to obtain or modify these benefits. Other popular items include the Office of Printing and Document Services Document Order and Print Order Forms, and the page that lists all Secretary of the Senate services.

E-Mail to the Webmaster

The nature of e-mail to the webmaster has changed over the past two years. The improved site navigation has reduced, to only one or two a day, the number of questions regarding how to find information on the main site. In late 2003 improved error-handling was added to the site to prevent a visitor from getting the standard "page not found" error when a broken link was encountered. A message is now displayed that provides the Webmaster's e-mail address and the visitor is automatically directed back to the main Senate Homepage or the Senator's Homepage, depending on where the error occurred. Many visitors take the opportunity to write the Webmaster alerting us to broken links. This, in turn, has fostered more communication between this office and Senators' System Administrators as we work together to clean up the broken links on the entire site.

Search Engine Implementation

In 2003 a search engine was installed, configured, and tested for senate.gov. In 2004 testing has continued, focusing on how to improve the search results by adding or editing metadata associated with the content items. It was hoped that more relevant and standardized keywords, and better descriptions and titles would improve the relevance ranking of the search results. Further research and investigation is required as to how to configure the search engine for best results. Meanwhile, the search engine has been made available to Senate offices for use on their own web sites.

Training

In December 2004 the Web Site Technology staff and several content providers in the Secretary's office joined SAA staff in an onsite three day XML class. In addition to teaching valuable technical skills and familiarizing staff with XML tools, this class gave content providers a good understanding of the power and scope of XML.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION SYSTEM (LIS) PROJECT

The Legislative Information System (LIS) is a mandated system (Section 8 of the 1997 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2 U.S.C. 123e) that provides desktop access to the content and status of legislative information and supporting documents. The 1997 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act (2 U.S.C. 181) also established a program for providing the widest possible exchange of information among legislative branch agencies. The long-range goal of the LIS Project is to provide a "comprehensive Senate Legislative Information System" to capture, store, manage, and distribute Senate documents. Several components of the LIS have been implemented, and the project is currently focused on a Senate-wide implementation and transition to a standard system for the authoring and exchange of legislative documents that will greatly enhance the availability and re-use of legislative documents within the Senate and with other legislative branch agencies. The LIS Project Office manages the project.

Background: LISAP

An April 1997 joint Senate and House report recommended establishment of a data standards program, and in December 2000, the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration and the Committee on House Administration jointly accepted the Extensible Markup Language (XML) as the primary data standard to be used for the exchange of legislative documents and information.

Following the implementation of the Legislative Information System (LIS) in January, 2000, the LIS Project Office shifted its focus to the data standards program and established the LIS Augmentation Project (LISAP). The over-arching goal of the LISAP is to provide a Senate-wide implementation and transition to XML for the authoring and exchange of legislative documents.

The current focus for the LISAP is the development and implementation of an XML authoring system for legislative documents produced by the Office of the Senate Legislative Counsel (SLC) and the Office of the Enrolling Clerk. The XML authoring application is called LEXA, an acronym for the Legislative Editing in XML Application. LEXA features many automated functions that provide a more efficient and consistent document authoring process. The LIS Project Office has worked very closely with the SLC to create an application that meets the needs for legislative drafting.

In early January 2004, LEXA was installed throughout the SLC, and the 40-member office of attorneys and staff assistants participated in a two-day training course, designed by a contractor, to transition from XyWrite to LEXA and from locator codes to XML. It takes several months for a drafter to learn to use XyWrite and the locator formatting codes. Following the two-day LEXA training course, SLC staff immediately began producing XML documents using LEXA, and the first XML draft to become a bill was introduced on January 22, 2004. The SLC first used LEXA to draft short and simple bills and resolutions, gradually adding longer, more complex documents. The SLC also offered valuable feedback throughout the year regarding LEXA's continued development as existing features were enhanced and additional document types, such as amendments and reported bills, were added to LEXA. Following the January training course, the contractor also created a reference manual. As new features were added to LEXA, the LIS Project Office continued to update the manual. The updated, comprehensive manual was distributed in January 2005. The manual provides screen shots and step-by-step instructions for all LEXA features. The Office also developed additional training materials and provided a one day training session in December for all SLC staff on new LEXA features, including a one-click process to change a document prepared for the 108th Congress to one for the 109th Congress. The SLC intends to use LEXA for as many drafts as possible and will gradually increase the number throughout 2005. Through April 1, 2005, 75 percent of the 770 introduced and reported bills and resolutions for the 109th Congress have been created as XML documents.

The LIS Project Office worked closely with several key House, Library of Congress, and Government Printing Office (GPO) groups involved in the XML project to ensure that changes to the House and Senate XML authoring applications do not adversely affect the exchange of electronic documents among all organizations processing the documents. A new document type definition (DTD) change and approval process was developed so that all parties have an opportunity to test and comment on all proposed changes to the exchange DTDs before changes are made and distributed.

Another important joint project of Senate and House offices involves the conversion of locator documents to XML. The locator conversion software was recently updated to provide a more robust tool, and a joint project is underway to convert the compilations of current law to an XML format. The compilations are updated by both the House and Senate Legislative Counsel Offices and are used as the basis for many legislative drafts. The compilations conversion project will be completed by July 2005.

As LEXA becomes more widely used in the SLC and other offices, support of the application becomes increasingly important. The 2004 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act directed the GPO to provide support for LEXA much as they have for XyWrite for many years, and GPO has made steps toward providing that support. GPO purchased Xmetal, the base software, and installed LEXA in late July. In August, the LIS Project Office conducted two evenings of LEXA training for the second shift of GPO staff who support the bill printing process. GPO now uses LEXA to update XML documents as requested via the Senate Bill Clerk, and the XML drafts are used to create the printed and locator versions of bills. In October, GPO took over maintenance and support of the coding and style sheet portion of LEXA that converts an XML document to locator for printing through Microcomp. GPO has also developed a style sheet that is used to display XML documents on the LIS website (www.congress.gov) and on thomas.loc.gov. The XML display more closely resembles the printed version (without page and line numbers). House XML bills are currently being tested, and once a majority of Senate bills are available in XML, the Senate XML versions will be posted on LIS as well.

The LIS Project Office provides support for LEXA via the LEXA HelpLine and LEXA web site. The HelpLine is provided through a single phone number that rings on all the phones in the office, and the website is located on a server accessible by the legislative branch. The website, legbranch.senate.gov/lis/lexa, is used to distribute updates of the application to GPO and provides access to release notes, the reference manual, and other user aids.

The document management system (DMS) for the SLC will be implemented once the SLC has completed the transition from XyWrite to LEXA and a substantial number of drafts are created in XML. Since mid-2004, the Systems Development Services group of the Office of the Sergeant at Arms has been working on updating the DMS to the most recent release of Documentum which was a major change for the base software of the DMS. The Systems Development Services group provides support and maintenance for the LIS/DMS, and that group will also support the DMS for the SLC once it is deployed. The LIS Project Office has been monitoring the upgrade effort and will contract for transition training to be developed and delivered prior to implementation. The DMS will be integrated with LEXA and will provide a powerful tracking, management, and delivery tool.

The LIS Project Office will continue to work with the SLC to refine and enhance LEXA, including developing software to create and print conference reports and to use and update the XML versions of the compilations of current law. The team will next address the specific needs of the Office of the Enrolling Clerk. Additional functionality to produce engrossed bills and amendments and enrolled bills will be added to LEXA, and that office will receive training. Other Senate offices that do drafting with XyWrite may follow, including the Committee on Appropriations.

The legislative process yields other types of documents such as the Senate and Executive Journals and the Legislative and Executive Calendars. Much of the data and information included in these documents is already captured in and distributed through the LIS/DMS database used by the clerks in the Office of the Secretary. The LIS/DMS captures data that relates to legislation including bill and resolution numbers, amendment numbers, sponsors, co-sponsors, and committees of referral. This information is currently entered into the database and verified by the clerks and then keyed into the respective documents and reverified at GPO before printing. An interface between this database and the electronic documents could mutually exchange data. For example, the LIS/DMS database could insert the bill number, additional co-sponsors, and committee of referral into an introduced bill while the bill draft document could supply the official and short titles of the bill to the database.

The Congressional Record, like the Journals and Calendars, includes data that is contained in and reported by the LIS/DMS database. Preliminary DTDs have been designed for these documents, and applications could be built to construct XML document components by extracting and tagging the LIS/DMS data. These applications would provide a faster, more consistent assembly of these documents and would enhance the ability to index and search their contents. The LIS Project Office will coordinate with the Systems Development Services Branch of the Office of the Sergeant at Arms to begin design and development of XML applications and interfaces for the LIS/DMS and legislative documents. As more and more legislative data and documents are provided in XML formats that use common elements across all document types, the Library of Congress will be able to expand the LIS Retrieval System to provide more content-specific searches.

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

STATEMENT OF ALAN HANTMAN, ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Senator ALLARD. I think we'll start, Mr. Hantman, with your testimony, and we may have to interrupt it shortly, but let's go ahead and see.

Mr. HANTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, look forward to working with you as the new Chair of the subcommittee. There's an awful lot for us to talk about, and I certainly look forward to that opportunity to do so.

I want to thank the subcommittee for its support in the past, without which we could not have completed many critical projects, continued to provide exemplary services, and assured continuity of operations in the U.S. Capitol, Senate office buildings, and throughout the Capitol complex.

Mr. Chairman, the AOC has served Congress since 1793, the year President Washington helped lower the cornerstone into place and construction of the Capitol began. Today, the AOC's responsibilities include the care and maintenance of nearly 300 acres and approximately 15 million square feet of historic buildings, which will soon include the Capitol Visitor Center.

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL STRATEGIC PLAN

When we implemented our strategic plan 2 years ago, we developed four goals that guide us in setting priorities when submitting budget requests, balancing our workload, and assessing and measuring our accomplishments. As we work to achieve these goals, we evaluate our efforts to improve and excel in growing as an organization; thereby, meeting and exceeding customer expectations. Accordingly, we're requesting $506 million across all AOC-managed appropriations to provide operations and renovation activities, while also focusing on security, upgrading fire and life-safety elements, and addressing customers' requests and priorities.

FISCAL YEAR 2006 MAJOR PROJECTS

Major capital projects included in this budget are the construction of Library of Congress storage modules 3 and 4 that you mentioned, the planned construction of the U.S. Capitol Police offsite delivery center, the installation upgrade of fire and life-safety and security measures, completion of additional fire egress and protection projects, and a variety of other renovations and upgrades throughout the Capitol complex.

Noteworthy, of course, is the Capitol Visitor Center project, which is the largest addition to the U.S. Capitol in its history, increasing the size of the existing building by some 70 percent. Included in the 580,000 square foot center is the construction of 170,000 square feet of expansion space for the Senate and House.

Construction completion of the visitor center portion of the project is scheduled for September 2006.

With regard to the Senate office buildings, in fiscal year 2004 we completed 45,892 work orders requested by Senators and their staffs. So far this fiscal year, we have completed some 22,250 Senate work orders to date. In addition, we've been working on a number of priority projects, including modernizing elevators, upgrading public restrooms, opening and maintaining the Senate staff exercise facility, completing election year moves in record time, and renovating, restoring, and upgrading several committee rooms to accommodate state-of-the-art equipment.

With the increased need for perimeter security measures, we're installing new security features throughout Capitol Hill. In addition to bollards and other features compatible with Senate building design installed to date along Constitution Avenue, we anticipate similar installations to complete the outer Senate perimeter over the next 2½ years.

EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK PROGRAM

Our strategic plan contains two goals which focus on our employees, while providing the highest-quality services. One of our objectives was to develop a comprehensive employee feedback program. Accordingly, in September 2004, I invited more than 300 employees from across the AOC to participate in 25 focus group sessions. We asked them to identify problems and challenges, to help us find ways to solve them, and to make improvements within the organization. In October 2004, the Human Resources Management Division surveyed all employees, asking them to pinpoint specific areas where we needed to improve customer satisfaction. Our employees spoke, and we are listening.

Over the next several months, we will be rolling out action plans, meeting with our employees to address the issues they raised, and share concerns, ideas, and suggested solutions with one another to continuously improve the organization.

In conclusion, over the past several years, the AOC has undergone significant change, and we have reaffirmed our commitment to providing superior services for the Congress and the American people. My team of 2,000 dedicated employees and I are committed to fulfilling our objective, to ensure our continuous improvement across all of our areas of responsibility.

Our request for funds for fiscal year 2006 supports our activities as good stewards to maintain and preserve the national treasures under our care, as well as to respond to our customers' requests for priority projects and programs. In addition, we continue to strive to achieve the level of safety, security, preservation, and cleanliness expected across the Capitol complex.

We have completed tens of thousands of work orders, to our clients' satisfaction, and have achieved many of our goals due to the hard work and dedication of AOC employees. I am very privileged and honored to lead such a professional team. The subcommittee's support in helping us achieve these goals is greatly appreciated.

PREPARED STATEMENT

Once again, I thank you for this opportunity to testify today. I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have. And good morning, Senator Durbin. Thank you for your support.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ALAN M. HANTMAN, FAIA

Mr. Chairman, Senator Durbin, members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify today. I want to thank the Committee for its support, without which we could not have completed many critical projects, continued to provide exemplary services, and assured continuity of operations in the U.S. Capitol, in the Senate Office Buildings, and throughout the Capitol complex.

The Office of the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) has served Congress since 1793—the year President George Washington helped tradesmen lower the cornerstone into place and construction of the U.S. Capitol began. Since that time, the men and women who make up the AOC's workforce have focused on preserving, maintaining, and enhancing the national treasures entrusted to us. Today our responsibilities include the care and maintenance of approximately 300 acres and nearly 15 million square feet of historic buildings, with the newest increment of growth being the upcoming Capitol Visitor Center (CVC).

STRATEGIC PLANNING

When we implemented our Strategic Plan two years ago, we developed four goals that encompass the primary responsibilities of our organization. They are: Facilities Management, Project Management, Human Capital, and Organizational Excellence. These goals drive our day-to-day activities. They guide us in setting priorities with regard to submitting budget requests, balancing our workload, and assessing and measuring our accomplishments. As we work to achieve these goals, we evaluate our efforts so we continue to excel, meet and exceed expectations, and grow as an organization.

OVERVIEW OF BUDGET REQUEST

The AOC fiscal year 2006 budget incorporates the needs of our clients, including the Library of Congress and the U.S. Capitol Police. We believe we have met the challenge of building a budget that supports stewardship of our national treasures, while balancing fiscal responsibility and the needs of the Congress. Our fiscal year 2006 budget was developed to continue to provide routine operations and renovation activities while also focusing on security, upgrading fire and life-safety elements, addressing clients' requests and priorities, and identifying operational, transitional, and cost-to-complete needs associated with the CVC.

Accordingly, we are requesting $506 million across all AOC managed appropriations ($438 million not including items specific to the House) for fiscal year 2006 to support the maintenance, care, and operations of the buildings and grounds of the Capitol complex, which consists primarily of the Capitol, Senate and House Office Buildings, Library of Congress, U.S. Capitol Police headquarters, Botanic Garden, and Capitol Power Plant. This includes a request for an operating budget of $280 million ($242 million not including operations specific to the House), $17 million for annually funded projects, $137 million for capital projects ($107 million not including items specific to the House), $37 million for the completion of the construction of the CVC, and $35 million to transition to operating the CVC.

OPERATING BUDGET

The request for an operating budget of $280 million (less CVC operations) includes mandatory payroll increases; price level inflationary increases for materials, services, and utilities, and other general operations increases. Additional increases in our operating budget incorporate client-driven requirements for leases of facilities and related operations and maintenance costs.

ANNUAL PROJECTS BUDGET

The fiscal year 2006 budget for annually funded projects totals $17 million. Noteworthy proposed annual projects include: Copyright Office Move/Reconfiguration for the Library of Congress Buildings ($5.5 million); Conservatory Claim for the Botanic Garden ($3.5 million); Restoration of East Front Bronze Doors for the Capitol Building ($702,000); and the Upgrade Filtration Efficiency Project for the Library of Congress Buildings ($700,000).

CAPITAL PROJECTS BUDGET

Two key elements used in preparing our capital budget are the Capitol Complex Master Plan and the Facility Condition Assessments (FCAs). The Capitol Complex Master Plan identifies preservation and maintenance requirements for proposed new facilities, while FCAs determine preservation and maintenance requirements for existing facilities. Based on the Capitol Complex Master Plan and FCAs, all proposed and existing facility requirements feed into the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which prioritizes and incorporates project needs over a five-year period (fiscal year 2006 through fiscal year 2010).

Accordingly, the CIP process was utilized in determining the fiscal year 2006 Capital Projects multi-year request of $122 million, $72 million of which directly addresses specific client needs. Noteworthy proposed capital projects include:

—The Library of Congress Modules 3 & 4 ($40.7 million) entailing the construction of two environmentally-controlled storage buildings to be located in Fort Meade for the storage of Library of Congress collections.

—The U.S. Capitol Police Off-Site Delivery Center ($23 million) which includes the acquisition of land, design, and construction of an off-site delivery facility.

—Life-safety and security projects ($14.5 million) which include requirements for emergency exit signs and lighting upgrades, upgrades to air filtration systems, and building upgrades to address other life-safety issues.

—Fire egress and protection projects ($12.6 million) which address deficiencies in egress from buildings, stairwells, and fire wall boundary protection.

—Renovation projects ($24.7 million) to include renovations in emergency electrical service, refinishing historic woodwork, legislative call system upgrades, restroom upgrades, high-voltage switchgear replacement, and heating ventilation/air conditioning replacement.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER BUDGET

The CVC project is the largest addition to the U.S. Capitol in its history. Included in the 580,000 square foot Visitor Center is the construction of 170,000 square feet of expansion space for the Senate and House. Building a major underground three-story facility, adjacent to the world's most recognizable symbol of democracy, which is a fully functioning office building, conference center, and museum, is truly a significant challenge. The project is now 55 percent done and scheduled for completion in fall 2006.

Many obstacles have been faced since we broke ground in 2000. Yet, despite these challenges, our project team recently met a critical, major milestone. On January 20, 2005, President Bush exited the Capitol onto the Rotunda steps where he reviewed the troops marching across the new granite pavers installed across the East Front Plaza, thereby continuing an Inaugural tradition.

The Sequence 1 contractor responsible for excavation and structural work has essentially completed its tasks. The Sequence 2 contractor has been working to install fireproofing, masonry block, interior wall stone, mechanical ductwork, and piping. The award of construction contracts is imminent for the exhibit space and the Senate expansion space.

My budget request for the CVC consists of several major components, the most significant being the construction cost-to-complete of $36.9 million. While no Congressional decision has been made regarding governance, startup and operational costs of $15.3 million are anticipated. Therefore, until such decision is reached, the AOC has included these expenses in its budget submission. This incorporates initial estimated costs associated with the daily care, maintenance activities, operation of the facility, and associated payroll and benefits costs. Additionally, the multi-year project budget of $20 million supports the required activities and programs for the transitional and start-up costs for visitor services, exhibits, food services, gift shops, telecommunications, and information technology infrastructure support.

Mr. Chairman, the progress made on the CVC in just the past 12 months has been remarkable. At the same time, the Capitol building has been open, fully functional, and accommodating of Members and staff, as well as the visiting public throughout construction and during these times of heightened security. When the CVC opens, it will complement and support the U.S. Capitol as the "People's House," offering free and open access for all people so they may learn about, and experience, our legislative process.

SENATE OFFICE BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

In fiscal year 2004, we completed 45,892 work orders in the Senate Office Buildings. To date, we have completed nearly 22,250 work orders in fiscal year 2005. In addition, we have been working on a number of important projects including:

—*Modernizing elevators*.—The Hart Office Building Elevator Modernization Project was completed in December 2004, six months ahead of schedule and on budget. The Russell Office Building elevators have been completely modernized. The Dirksen Office Building Elevators Cab Modernization Project will begin this summer.

—*Upgrading public restrooms*.—The Hart Office Building northwest restroom stack and the Dirksen Office Building north stack was completed last year. Currently, the Dirksen Office Building basement level restrooms are under construction, which will be followed by the ground floor restrooms, which will complete the renovations in that building. There are two remaining stacks to be completed in the Hart Office Building, which will begin this year and be completed in fiscal year 2006.

—*Staff Exercise Facility*.—In May 2004, our office opened the Senate Staff Exercise facility.

—*Russell Office Building Basement Corridor Renovation*.—The renovation of the C Street corridor of the Russell Office Building was completed and the Delaware Avenue corridor is currently being renovated.

—*Renovation of the Dirksen Swing Suite Space*.—The renovation of this space provides for the consolidation of support functions and adds two swing suite spaces thus improving the temporary office conditions for newly-elected Senators and speeding the Senate move process.

—*Election Year Moves*.—Election year moves were completed on February 26—the earliest we have ever accomplished this task.

—*Committee Room Renovations*.—Room 106 in the Dirksen Building and Agriculture Committee Hearing Room were completely renovated to upgrade the infrastructure, and add state-of-the-art sound and video capabilities, while at the same time, preserving the historic architecture of the rooms. In fiscal year 2005, five committee rooms will be renovated, followed by an additional five in fiscal year 2006.

CAPITOL BUILDING

The U.S. Capitol has been the stage for several high-profile events this past year. In June 2004, the world's eyes turned to us as we bid farewell to President Ronald W. Reagan. Our employees, working together with Congressional leadership and other Legislative branch organizations, did a tremendous job to ready the building and grounds for the respectful and historic lying-in-state ceremonies.

In January, the West Front of the Capitol was readied for the 55th Presidential Inaugural ceremony. Our team worked diligently to design, plan, and construct the platform; contract for the sound system, Jumbotron screens, and ramps and crossovers; install security fencing and crowd control features; set up 28,000 chairs; build the media platform; hang flags, draperies, and bunting; prepare Statuary Hall for the inaugural luncheon, and draft a contingency plan to move the ceremony to the Rotunda in case of inclement weather. Most importantly, on January 19, we worked throughout the night to remove all the snow from the Grounds, leaving a pristine setting for the Inaugural on the East and West Fronts of the Capitol.

In fiscal year 2004, we completed more than 20,000 work orders in the Capitol Building. To date this fiscal year, we have completed more than 10,000.

CAPITOL POWER PLANT

An on-going project, designed to meet the current and future needs of the Capitol complex, is the expansion of the West Refrigeration Plant at the Capitol Power Plant. This project addresses the advancing age of the East Refrigeration Plant, and the need to reliably meet future cooling requirements of the expanding Capitol complex. The chilled water capacity will be online by November 2005, with the overall project scheduled for completion in April 2006. When finished, the expanded facility will enable the Capitol Power Plant to reliably meet cooling requirements through 2025 and will significantly increase overall plant efficiency.

In addition to addressing future energy needs, the Power Plant staff is also working to beautify the facility and the grounds surrounding it. This month, we began efforts to install 20-foot-wide, brick-paved sidewalks, which will be shaded by two rows of trees, alongside the Plant's newly-created park area. In addition, a decorative wrought iron fence will be erected to replace the security fence now surrounding the Power Plant. The AOC has been working closely with the Ward 6B Advisory Neighborhood Committee, the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), and other agencies to improve and transform the South Capitol Street corridor into a grand urban boulevard.

PERIMETER SECURITY

With the increased need for permanent security measures throughout the Capitol complex, we are installing effective, aesthetically-pleasing, perimeter security features on Capitol Hill. Senate perimeter security efforts completed over the last year include the installation of bollards along Constitution Avenue, extending from the Russell, Dirksen, and Hart Senate Office Buildings. We also installed 14 hydraulic vehicle barriers stations in Constitution Avenue. Over the next year, we anticipate installing the remaining bollards and vehicle barriers that complete the outer Senate perimeter.

PROJECT DELIVERY

We have taken several steps to improve our project delivery. Last September, we established a pilot Project Management organization comprised of project managers, construction managers, and construction inspectors. The proposed alignment establishes clear performance expectations for delivering projects on time and within budget now that the project and construction management functions reside, for the first time, within the same organization.

A good design equals good construction. Construction management is intrinsically linked to project management. Through this new project management organization and process, we will ensure that the design and construction teams interact daily. This alignment is endorsed by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to, "align project management staff and resources with AOC's mission-critical goals."

In accordance with our Strategic Plan, an annual "lessons learned" exercise is conducted for projects identified by our clients. During this time a comprehensive assessment of each project is undertaken to apply lessons learned to future projects and facilitate continuous improvement.

HUMAN CAPITAL/ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Our Strategic Plan contains Human Capital and Organizational Excellence goals which focus on employees and providing the highest quality services to both our internal and external clients through improved business programs, processes, and systems.

One of our objectives under the Human Capital Strategic Plan goal was to develop a comprehensive employee feedback program that will utilize focus groups, surveys, and other related mechanisms. In September 2004, I invited more than 300 employees from across the AOC—all divisions, levels, and shifts—to participate in 25 focus group sessions. We asked them to identify problems, help us to find ways to solve them, and make improvements within the organization. In October, the Human Resources Management Division (HRMD) asked all employees to share their opinions in a customer satisfaction survey. The questions focused on the services HRMD provides and how well they deliver those services.

By coupling the feedback and the survey results, we were able to pinpoint specific areas where we needed to take action. In other words, our employees spoke and we listened.

They told us that we needed to do a better job communicating, that we needed to provide clearer, easier-to-understand information, and that we needed to better explain work processes, policies, and procedures. They also indicated that we needed to provide clearer direction with regard to expectations and job performance, and recognize employee accomplishments more often. These issues also applied to setting internal standards so our employees receive satisfactory customer support from our Human Resources, EEO, and other service organizations.

Over the next several months, we will be rolling out action plans and meeting with employees to address the issues they raised. This effort will help us to continue to foster an environment where we can share concerns and ideas with one another to continue to improve the organization.

EMPLOYEE SAFETY

One area we continue to make great strides in is our effort to reduce the injury and illness rate. I am pleased to report that for the fourth consecutive year, our rate decreased dramatically. During fiscal year 2004, we saw a 26 percent reduction in the injury and illness rate. Since fiscal year 2000, this rate has been reduced by 67 percent and is now below the Federal average.

We attribute this reduction to a number of initiatives, including inspections of project worksites, daily safety discussions in our shops at the beginning of each shift, the posting of monthly safety messages throughout our shops and offices, active participation by employees in our Jurisdictional safety committees, and most importantly, to the constant diligence of each AOC employee and supervisor who is committed to doing their job safely and correctly. To assure that our employees have the requisite skills and equipment needed to do their jobs safely, I will continue to maintain robust training and safety budgets.

While I am very proud of my workforce and our past accomplishments, I will not be satisfied until we achieve our ultimate goal of a workplace free of injury and illness. Toward this end, I have challenged my colleagues to reduce the injury rate by an additional 10 percent. I look forward to reporting on our progress toward an injury- and illness-free workplace to this Committee next year.

CONCLUSION

Over the past several years, the AOC has undergone significant change, and we have reaffirmed our commitment to providing high-quality service to Congress and the American people. In its August 2004 report to Congress, the GAO indicated that:

—"AOC has made progress in preparing agency-wide financial statements; supporting an audit of its September 30, 2003, balance sheet; and establishing related internal control policies and procedures."

—". . . AOC has made progress addressing employee communications by developing a number of policies and procedures, such as a strategic communications plan, a draft employee feedback manual, a customer satisfaction survey manual, and a focus group guide."

—"Our January 2003 report provided AOC with recommendations for establishing and implementing an effective information security program. In our January 2004 report, we noted that AOC had made progress toward implementing these recommendations."

—"AOC has fulfilled our worker safety recommendation by developing performance measures to assess the long-term impacts and trends of workers' compensation injuries and costs."

—"During the six-month review period, AOC took steps to develop the Capitol Complex Master Plan."

—"AOC made progress in the development of its environmental program and its movement toward a more strategic approach. In particular, AOC has completed the baseline assessment as well as the waste stream analysis for its facilities and operations."

Although we still have much more to accomplish as outlined in our Strategic Plan, GAO has noted, "organizational transformation does not come quickly or easily and the changes underway at the AOC would require a long-term, concerted effort." My team and I are committed to fulfilling our responsibilities over the long-term to ensure that our transformation continues as planned.

Our request for funds for fiscal year 2006 is in direct response to our responsibility to maintain and preserve the facilities under our care, as well as to respond to our customers' requests for priority projects and programs. In addition, we continue to strive to achieve the level of safety, security, preservation, and cleanliness expected across the Capitol complex. We have completed tens of thousands of work orders to our clients' satisfaction and have achieved many of our goals due to the hard work and dedication of AOC employees. I am very privileged and honored to lead such a professional team.

The Committee's support in helping us achieve these goals is greatly appreciated. Once again, thank you for this opportunity to testify today. I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Senator ALLARD. I'd like to also welcome Senator Durbin. I had indicated earlier, Senator Durbin, that, when you arrived, we'd give you an opportunity to make some opening comments if you wish. And then, also, I just wanted to thank both Ms. Reynolds and Mr. Hantman for taking the time to testify here before us today.

We're ready to move to a question and response period, but I wanted to give you an opportunity to present your opening statement first. So why don't you proceed?

STATEMENT OF SENATOR RICHARD J. DURBIN

Senator DURBIN. Mr. Chairman, first let me welcome you to the subcommittee.

Senator ALLARD. Thank you.

Senator DURBIN. It's an honor to serve with you. I think you are the third Chair that I've served with on this subcommittee, and I'm looking forward to working with you. And in the interest of time, let me put my statement in the record, and you can go straight to questions, and I'll follow you.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR RICHARD J. DURBIN

Mr. Chairman, first of all I'd like to welcome you, Chairman Allard, to the Legislative Branch subcommittee. I had the pleasure of working with your former colleague from Colorado, Senator Campbell, as the last Chairman of this subcommittee and I look forward to working with you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for scheduling today's first budget oversight hearing of fiscal year 2006 where we will hear testimony on the budget requests of the Secretary of the Senate and the Architect of the Capitol.

I want to join the Chairman in welcoming today's witnesses, Emily Reynolds, Secretary of the Senate, and Alan Hantman, Architect of the Capitol.

Thanks to both of you for attending this morning.

Ms. Reynolds, welcome back to the subcommittee for your third year as Secretary of the Senate. I think that you and your staff are doing a superb job and your budget request looks very straightforward.

My staff and I greatly appreciate your guidance and leadership in the CVC decision-making progress. I realize that this is a long, difficult, and at times frustrating process. Your dedication and determination are very admirable.

I would appreciate any comments you might wish to include with regard to the CVC.

Mr. Hantman, good morning and welcome. Your budget request this year is $506 million, which is an increase of $156.5 million or 44 percent over fiscal year 2005 enacted. I realize that a large portion of your request is for Library of Congress and Capitol Police project items. All in all, your operating budget request seems fairly straightforward.

I was encouraged to read that the rate of accidents and injuries within the Architect's office continues to improve. This has been a major area of concern to me, as you know, and I am glad to see these numbers are coming down so dramatically.

I hope you will talk a little about the Capitol Visitor Center project. I hope you will update the Subcommittee on when you believe the CVC will open and what the final cost will be. I realize that the project has grown in size and scope from the original design when we broke ground back in 2000, but I don't think those changes account for the magnitude of the delay and cost overruns.

Last year, I asked you if you thought the spring 2006 estimated completion date for the CVC was accurate. While I don't recall your answer off-hand, I think I know what your answer would be if I asked you the same question today. So now I'd like to ask you if you think the fall 2006 date is accurate. In your testimony you state that since breaking ground in 2000, the CVC is now 55 percent complete. I find it hard to believe that the remaining 45 percent of this project can be finished in the next 17 months.

Mr. Hantman, as you know, this subcommittee is responsible for providing adequate funding to complete AOC projects such as the CVC. However, in order to do that, it is critical that we receive the most accurate information available from you and your staff. It appears that the Government Accountability Office has been far more effective than your office in providing accurate information to the members of this subcommittee and our staffs on your funding requests.

I was very concerned to read a February 23, 2005 article from "The Hill" newspaper entitled, "Fear and Loathing at the AOC," which addressed the results of a 22-page survey taken by 300 of your employees. I hope that you and your management team are making every effort to address the allegations of abuse and mismanagement alluded to by these employees. It troubles me that some long-standing issues at AOC continue to exist, such as poor communications and very low morale. You are responsible for 2,000 employees. It is critical that these employees feel they can trust you and your front office. Without the trust and confidence of your employees, you cannot effectively run this organization.

Finally, Mr. Hantman, I'm eager for you to update the Subcommittee on your progress in making the Capitol complex a safer work environment.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS EFFORTS

Senator ALLARD. Very good, thank you.

Ms. Reynolds, you did mention, in your testimony, that you did a lot of work on the inaugural, and I want to just thank you, your staff and the Architect of the Capitol, for your work during the Inaugural Address. I think it was a very successful effort, and I think most Members appreciate all the fine work that went into that. And I just think that's worth mentioning at this particular point in time.

Which leads me into a question, Ms. Reynolds, what were all your responsibilities in coordinating that effort? I'd like to know some of the challenges you faced. We just had an election, and then we had the inaugural in January. And if you can share some challenges with us, we'd appreciate it, perhaps suggestion of what might be done differently at the next inaugural.

Ms. REYNOLDS. No, I appreciate that. We certainly took our lead from the Joint Committee on the Inaugural, from Senator Lott and his team. And I think one thing that we found—clearly, the Joint Committee did a beautiful job, and came, to us with the numerous things that were needed. I think, for us, one legacy I'd like to leave behind is a very distinct record of the precise things that the Secretary's office is involved with in that inaugural effort. For example, the official reporters of debates actually have a position on the platform so that they're there to transcribe the inaugural. For me, it's the first time I've been through that, while, again, the institutional memory, that important part of our staff that have been here for years, they know the things they do every 4 years, but we found that it wasn't in our own operation in any sort of concise record.

One thing I'd like to leave behind for the next Secretary is that concise record of exactly what expectations that a joint committee on the inaugural will have for us. The second piece of that is, we were delighted to work with the committee on the inaugural luncheon, which is staged in Statuary Hall. That was a huge effort on the part of our staff; again, taking the lead from Senator Lott and his team. But they did an extraordinary job in executing the lunch. And, most especially, the Curator's Office takes the lead in whichever historical painting is displayed at that luncheon, which is a reflection of the theme of the inaugural itself.

So, we're involved in a variety of different levels, a variety of different ways. It was a learning experience for me, as well. And I would add, also, that many of our staff, and myself included, had the opportunity and the high honor to serve as escorts that day; again, assisting the Joint Committee.

So, we play in this at a variety of different levels. Some, were well informed going in; others, learned along the way. But with the Joint Committee providing the leadership, I think we're even better prepared to step up to the plate in the next 4 years and have that clear and concise knowledge, of precisely what our role is.

CURATORIAL ADVISORY BOARD AND PRESERVATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Senator ALLARD. You mentioned, in your testimony, the new boards, the Curatorial Advisory Board and the Preservation Board of Trustees. What, specifically, are you doing to promote the efforts to the Senate community and beyond that these two boards were set up to carry out?

Ms. REYNOLDS. Thanks for asking that, because this is such—as I said, it's such an important initiative for all of us. And much of this really is an education process, it's a building process. The Curatorial Advisory Board, again, as I mentioned—12 really outstanding individuals, 13 counting our curator, who serves as its chair—they have already been a significant help to us in helping us identify possible acquisitions, in spreading the word, with all of them as professionals, whether it's from Monticello, Winterthur, the retired White House curator—their network of associates, people they've worked with through the years, has already been very helpful to us in identifying some possible acquisitions, and we've relied on their counsel very heavily already.

The Preservation Board, which, as I said, will meet in May—I'm anxious for that meeting—again, an esteemed group of individuals, who will come at this from both a business perspective, a philanthropic perspective—so I'm interested in working with them, at their first meeting, to begin to paint that blank canvas, if you will, of what specific direction that board takes.

Within our Senate community, we unveiled the Brumidi oil sketch that I mentioned, very recently, thanks to Senator Stevens, in the President pro tempore's office, and Roll Call covered that. We've done a feature in our Secretary newsletter of UNUM, which we do every quarter, and will continue to educate our own community about the efforts underway. And, again, through both of these boards, people who have a reach, not only within our Senate community, but certainly well beyond, I anticipate that we'll continue to see renewed interest in the possibility of both returning some historic artifacts to the Senate that perhaps we've lost through the years, and also pinpointing acquisitions that will reflect the history and the tradition of this institution.

CHANGING TECHNOLOGIES

Senator ALLARD. Technology is changing all our lives rapidly, both at home and, I think, here in the Capitol. And I'll have to admit that I have a certain fixation for high technology, myself, and am not reluctant to step into some of the challenges of new technology in my own personal office. I'm curious to know how you stay on top of those advances, and then, once you decide to bring them in, how can we be assured that they're going to operate as advertised.

Ms. REYNOLDS. Well, probably, to the latter portion of your question, the best way we're assured that they operate as advertised is the feedback from our own Senate community, and that's why having folks, for example, like the administrative managers involved with our FMIS, the various pilot projects that we roll out. Having folks involved early on to help us in knowing what works and what doesn't is key.

But, quickly, I would say, in terms of how we stay abreast of technological developments, it's really threefold.

First of all, we have, internally, a top-notch information systems department that's on the cutting edge and that helps us, across the board, in remaining there and providing that sort of service internally to the Secretary's office.

Second of all, our department heads are all continually looking for better ways to do business, whether it's, as I said, working through the process of putting the library catalog online, to something as simple as providing an online service for individuals to order their paper through printing and document services, but, again, those simple things that now can be done with the click of button, if you will. And our department heads are very much involved in that process.

And, finally, again, part of that collaborative effort, since our Sergeant at Arms takes the lead on technology in the Senate, we, again, work very closely with them on technological advances. They're a huge help to us in that regard.

Senator ALLARD. Now I would like to go ahead and call on Senator Durbin. And Mr. Chairman, I'm glad that you're able to join us this morning, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator Cochran.

SENATE CLERKS

Senator DURBIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Reynolds, thank you for being here, and thank you for your service to the Senate.

In your capacity, you're responsible for the professional staff that supports our legislative activity in the Senate. The clerks process the work we perform on the floor. What is the current status of that group, in terms of hires and qualifications and vacancies?

Ms. REYNOLDS. Right now, we are fully staffed on that legislative team. And I appreciate you asking about them, because they are really, in so many ways, the quiet, unsung heroes of the Senate. You know, because you're there, the hours that they put in on a daily basis. And, at the end of the day, when the Senate adjourns, when those four bells go off, their work, in essence, really begins, in so many ways. They return to their offices to prepare the Calendar of Business, the Executive Calendar, to complete the transcriptions and send those to the Government Printing Office for the printing of the Congressional Record overnight, the completion of the Daily Digest, which, of course, is completed in that record. So it really is a remarkable team.

But it's important, with that team, because of the importance of the Senate's constitutional responsibilities, to make sure that we have a balance of Senate professionals, many of whom have 20 plus years of experience in that team, and also constantly bring in fresh blood—younger people, if you will, folks who are here to serve the Senate in a nonpartisan way, and hopefully make it a career so that we have that continuity.

It's so important on that team, when you look at—in the fact that, within the last two decades, there have been 11 Secretaries, so you see the importance of that institutional memory, that constant learning process. For example, in one of our departments, where we knew we had a retirement coming in a very critical position, we began the transition process, if you will, the succession planning, 1 year in advance, so that we were assured, on the day that that individual departed, we weren't going to miss a beat; again, in that very critical service. So we try to look—we try to look to the future, we remain as constant as we possibly can; again, recognizing that your constitutional responsibilities are first and foremost in our minds.

STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

Senator DURBIN. And, of course, in addition to long hours and important job responsibilities, they face the cruel and unusual punishment of listening to our speeches all day, so they deserve some recognition and reward for that. How is the Student Loan Repayment Program coming along?

Ms. REYNOLDS. It's coming along. It's growing.

Senator DURBIN. Tell me how you use it.

Ms. REYNOLDS. The legislation specifies that the program be used for retention and recruitment; and, that, of course, is the byword for the Senate offices. As you well know, with each Member as his or her own employing office, it is up to each office, at the current time, to decide how they administer the program. And you and I have spoken about this before in—I think, at last year's hearing. We conducted a fairly in-depth survey now about 1 year ago. We had 60 something odd offices, out of the 140 in the Senate, respond. But we found, obviously, great support for the program. We found that folks—they set their parameters in different ways as to how they employ the program. Many require at least 6 months of service before the individual is eligible for the student loan. Some set various and different caps within the office as to how much they actually give for the loan. I think the amount is up to $500. But that will vary among offices. So the administration of it is actually driven by each individual office.

What we are constantly looking for are ways to streamline the process, because it can be a cumbersome process. And, to be honest, you know, sometimes we're chasing up to as many as 100 lenders, if you will, to make sure those payments are going to the right place. And, obviously, loans, of course, within the industry are constantly being sold and repackaged. That's a challenge for us. And within the course of the last few months, we've introduced a paperwork process that we hope will help both the disbursing office and the individual receiving the loan.

We currently have just under 900 individuals participating in the program, at a cost of about just over $3 million to the Senate right now. And, at last report, Senator Durbin, we had about 126 offices participating. That's roughly the same number as the previous year.

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

Senator DURBIN. What has been your personal experience about the retention and recruitment angle? When I first brought this up, it was in the hopes that student loan repayment would be an incentive for good, talented graduates to come work here on Capitol Hill and not be discouraged by the, perhaps, lower startup pay than they might find in another place, or to retain those who enhance their education, and we'd like to keep on and use their talents. So what has your experience been in that?

Ms. REYNOLDS. I think, again, I'm going to refer back to the surveys that we received, because that's one area that we specifically addressed in the surveys of the offices. Many offices—and, again, this is anecdotal evidence—but they mentioned to us instances where they wanted to hire—you know, an office wanted to hire a young lawyer, obviously who had significant bills from law school, and they said, frankly, that without the opportunity to use that as a recruitment tool, they might have lost that talent somewhere else; again, because of the pay structure here.

So while much of this is anecdotal evidence, it was very strong anecdotal evidence that the offices take that retention and recruitment tool seriously, as do we in the Secretary's office, as well. So we employ the program, as well, and use it in the same ways.

Statistical evidence, hard to come by on that; but the anecdotal evidence from the offices, very positive in using it as a tool.

Senator DURBIN. Mr. Chairman, I don't know, maybe it's been 2 or 3 years since we've had this, and it kind of started in an odd way; let a thousand flowers bloom, we said to each office, "Here's what we're—here are the goals. See how they work with your policies, personnel policies." I'm hoping that we can gather this information and maybe harmonize some of this. I don't want a top-down rulemaking procedure, but if there are ways to put in some safeguards, to avoid abuses, to make sure there's no waste, to enhance the initial goals of the program, I'd like to do that, too.

Thank you, Ms. Reynolds.

Ms. REYNOLDS. We look forward to working with you on that. Thank you, sir.

Senator DURBIN. Thank you.

Senator ALLARD. Well said. And I would note that we do have a lot of people here today that are part of the office of the secretary, the parliamentarian, enrolling clerk, Senate security, and they do a tremendous job. I don't know how they keep the place running sometimes, but they're able to do it, and with a good deal of grace and finesse, keeping a lot of big egos happy, and they're to be commended for their job.

Mr. Chairman.

Senator COCHRAN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Congratulations to you are in order for——

Senator ALLARD. Thank you.

Senator COCHRAN [continuing]. Your assuming the chairmanship of this important subcommittee. We welcome you, not only to the Committee on Appropriations, but in your new undertaking as chairman of this subcommittee, and we look forward to working closely with you and trying to support you in every way.

Senator ALLARD. Thank you.

THE SENATE DISBURSING OFFICE, "THE FRONT COUNTER"

Senator COCHRAN. Welcome to the subcommittee, Ms. Reynolds and Mr. Hantman. We appreciate very much your cooperation with our Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee and the good work that each of you do in carrying out your responsibilities.

These are very important jobs. I am impressed. When I read the summary of your responsibilities, I always come across some item of information that surprises me. Today, for example—and I don't know why I had overlooked this in the past—I found out that the front counter is the place where the financial business of the Senate is handled, and that's under the jurisdiction of the Secretary. Could you tell us what the origin of the phrase "the front counter" is?

Ms. REYNOLDS. That is a great question, and I'm going to defer to our financial clerk, Tim Wineman, to answer that.

Mr. Wineman.

Mr. WINEMAN. It is literally just that, a front counter. It kind of resembles an old banking organization. We used to be located in the second floor of the Capitol Building, right down from the Senate Chamber, and there was a huge counter that Senators and staff would come in to conduct daily business with the Disbursing Office, and we'd have staff behind the counter. And it's just evolved over the years as, kind of, the receiving point for the work that comes in from the Senate offices. General business is conducted there, inquiries, new staff are sworn in there, financial transactions, as far as issuing cash advances for travel. So it's kind of similar to a bank lobby atmosphere, and it literally is just that, there's a big counter there, and that's the term that's been used over the years.

Senator COCHRAN. But it doesn't function as the House Bank used to.

Mr. WINEMAN. No, sir.

Senator COCHRAN. No.

I just want to be sure that——

Mr. WINEMAN. In fact, I'd like to be very clear on that.

Having been here during that time, and there was a significant amount of publicity, no, it does not function as the House Bank.

Senator COCHRAN. Right. Well, it is, obviously, an important responsibility, and the offices are physically located in the Hart Senate Office Building?

Mr. WINEMAN. First floor of the Hart Building, yes, sir. We were asked to move a number of years ago, after spending a lot of time in the Capitol, when we—we literally outgrew the space that was in the Capitol building. And so, when the Hart Building was opened, in 1982, we moved over there and are located on the first floor, yes, sir.

Senator COCHRAN. Well, we appreciate your good work in supervising that operation.

Mr. WINEMAN. Thank you, sir.

Senator COCHRAN. Is there sufficient request in the budget for the operation of the front counter?

Mr. WINEMAN. Yes, sir. The Secretary has been very supportive of, not only the entire Disbursing Office, but our front-counter operation, as well.

Senator COCHRAN. That's great. Well, we thank you for that explanation and information.

Mr. WINEMAN. Yes, sir.

Senator COCHRAN. Now, could I ask a question of the Architect?

Senator ALLARD. You may, Mr.——

Senator DURBIN. Mr. Chairman, would you yield for a moment?

Senator COCHRAN. Sure.

Senator DURBIN. I just wanted to make a record here that when I was elected to the Senate, in 1996, and came to sign up for my payroll, they said, "You've worked here before," and I said, "Yes, I was an intern here in 1966, 30 years ago." And they said, "Yes, we kept your file," and they brought it out.

So pretty good file work there.

Senator COCHRAN. Very good, thank you.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER

Mr. Hantman, thank you for being here and participating in this exercise, too. I think the biggest challenge you're facing is the new visitor center. I appreciate very much your taking time to take me on a tour recently and show me the work that was in progress. It is really quite an impressive undertaking. And, of course, it's very expensive, as well.

What efforts are you making to try to hold down the costs? I hear rumors about overruns and schedule deadlines not being met. What are you personally trying to do to help get control over that project?

Mr. HANTMAN. Mr. Chairman, it is, as you know, a very complex project. And perhaps what we can best explain it by using some things that I don't expect you to be able to visualize or see very clearly from the dais.

If we could just set up a board or two over here.

This project, as you know, Mr. Chairman, has evolved since its inception. The budget for the CVC was first set in 1998. We talked a little bit about the inaugural, with the Secretary a little while ago, and the inaugural that we just celebrated was really key to how the entire visitor center was framed.

Before I get into that, if I may, I think I would be remiss, if I could——

Senator COCHRAN. Well, I'd just rather for you to succinctly respond to the question that I asked, rather than go into the history and the description of the project in detail. That'll come later, I'm sure, when the chairman is asking questions.

Mr. HANTMAN. Well, we have a full-time accountant on the job, Mr. Chairman. Every change order or any purchase order that comes on through is reviewed by our accounting group. Our project executive, Mr. Bob Hixon, who is behind me right now, reviews all of those, and we make sure that we pay only those that are really appropriate and that we authorized the work for in the first place.

What we are trying to do is get the remaining contracts on the street and awarded as soon as we can, because the inflation rate continues to rise. And if we can award them, we can hold the rates that we currently have; otherwise, we might have to rebid areas such as the expansion spaces for the Senate, for the House, for the exhibition areas, for the tunnel under the House office—House Capitol side of the connector.

So we're trying to move forward as quickly as we can to make sure that we lock in the prices and the bids that we have at this point in time, to make sure that the contractors understand that we're going to be holding them to their responsibilities, as well, and that we monitor that effectively on a day-to-day basis.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to be here and participate in the hearing.

Senator ALLARD. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I appreciate you taking a personal interest in this. I had an opportunity to have a tour by Mr. Hantman.

I thought it was a very good tour. I'm, like you, very impressed with the scope of the facility. I look forward as I think many members do, at getting into that facility. The sooner we can get there, the better I think everybody will feel.

BUDGET AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN (CIP) PROCESS

I know that it's a particular challenge for you, Mr. Hantman. You are requesting a pretty sizeable increase—45 percent—over the current budget. That type of increase does catch the attention of all of us. How have you scrubbed that budget? Have you tried to set priorities within the budget so that if we're unable to meet your request, where would you recommend that we make reductions?

Mr. HANTMAN. Mr. Chairman, you alluded, in your opening statements, on the issues of project management and master planning, two very key areas, in terms of improving our control and our projections on what the costs will be going forward, not only on individual projects, but in budgets that we will be bringing forward to this subcommittee in years to come. So, we have a CIP process, which is a Capital Improvements Plan. In that process, we rank all of the proposed projects that come forward, on a strong basis. If we could put up that board, that would be pretty helpful, I think. But what we do is, first, we have to identify projects, we have to evaluate those projects, we have to rank them and rate them before going into the budget process. So this CIP process that we have used this year for the first time is something that gives us a prioritization of those projects based on fire and life-safety issues, based on physical security issues, historic preservation and stewardship issues, impact on our mission, and the economics of it. We rank all of these projects on a scale that gives a real value to each one of them as they relate to each other and to those five key areas.

So, if we were told to cut back on our projects at this point, Mr. Chairman, what we would do is go back down to our list of elements we currently have been asking for, and start at the bottom. Those things that are ranked the lowest in the project budget, we would start eliminating, to the point at which you are willing to fund the rest of it.

Senator ALLARD. And does our staff have this list and these rankings on these projects that we can look at, at some point in time?

Mr. HANTMAN. We certainly could review all of those projects with a full background, in terms of how we prioritized them in the first place. And we'd be happy to sit down and review that. And certainly we wouldn't cut anything unless we specifically worked with you and your staff.

Senator ALLARD. We could be facing a pretty tight budget here.

Mr. HANTMAN. Yes.

Senator ALLARD. And it would be nice if we could give it some thought ahead of time. And so, the sooner you could share where your priorities are with our staff, I think it would be very helpful to them, and helpful to members on this subcommittee, to see where you're thinking is on those reductions.

Mr. HANTMAN. We have that prioritization, already, sir. It's how we established the budget request. We'd be more than happy to sit down and review it. We can start from the bottom up, and whatever we have to eliminate because of budget criteria, we'd be ready to do that.

Senator ALLARD. Very good.

[The information follows:]

TABLE 2.—FISCAL YEAR 2006 LINE ITEM CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM SUBMITTED TO THE CONGRESS

PROJECT NUMBER	PROJECT TITLE	PROGRAM AREA	JURISDICTION	PROJECT MANAGER	PROJECT COST [1]	PROJECT EVALUATION SCORING						NOTES
						A	B	C	D	E	TOTAL	
	SECTION 1—PROJECTS (EXCLUDING SUPREME COURT) ATTAINING A SCORE OF 90 OR HIGHER IN AT LEAST ONE EVALUATION CATEGORY [2]											
000231D	Smoke Detector Upgrades, JAB	BIM-SER	LOC	PRichards	$3,700,000	80	90	80	80	20	350	
000231E	Smoke Detector Upgrades, JMMB	BIM-SER	LOC	PRichards	3,700,000	80	90	80	80	20	350	
020188	Emergency Electrical Service Upgrade, USC	BIM-SER	USC	JScuderi	2,980,000	40	90	60	80	60	330	
970711D	High Voltage Switchgear Replacement, HSOB	BIM-SER	SOB	ZBajbor	540,000	....	90	80	70	40	280	
970711E	High Voltage Switchgear Replacement, FHOB & RHOB	BIM-SER	HOB	ZBajbor	2,120,000	....	90	80	70	40	280	(3)
	Ford House Office Building (FHOB)				(1,070,000)	....	....	....	....	....	....	
	Rayburn House Office Building (RHOB)				(1,050,000)	....	....	....	....	....	....	
970711F	High Voltage Switchgear Replacement, TJB & JMMB	BIM-SER	LOC	ZBajbor	2,270,000	....	90	80	70	40	280	(3)
	Thomas Jefferson Building (TJB)				(1,090,000)	....	....	....	....	....	....	
	James Madison Memorial Building (JMMB)				(1,180,000)	....	....	....	....	....	....	
970269GA	Compartment Barriers and Horizontal Exits, USC	BIM-GEN	USC	KSchonbgr	2,630,000	50	90	40	60	30	270	
970269GB	West Terrace Egress Doors and Stairs, USC	REG-FIR	USC	KSchonbgr	1,700,000	....	90	10	....	20	120	
	SECTION 2—REMAINING PROJECTS (EXCLUDING SUPREME COURT)											
020238	Book Storage Modules 3 & 4, Fort Meade, LOC	BIM-GEN	LOC	MVarga	40,700,000	80	40	80	70	10	280	
000018A	Emergency Lighting Upgrade, RHOB	REG-FIR	HOB	SSethi	4,790,000	....	80	40	10	40	170	
000018C	Emergency Lighting Upgrade, LHOB	REGFIR	HOB	SSethi	2,700,000	....	80	40	10	40	170	
000018D	Emergency Lighting Upgrade, FHOB	REG–FIR	HOB	SSethi	1,030,000	....	80	40	10	40	170	
000207B	Emergency Lighting Upgrade, HSOB	REG-FIR	SOB	RSoriente	3,600,000	....	80	40	10	40	170	
020202A	Emergency Exit Signs and Lighting, USC	BIM-SER	USC	JScuderi	1,000,000	....	80	40	10	20	150	(4)
030293	East Front Plantings, CG	BIM-SIT	CG	ACoulson	740,000	80	....	60	....	....	140	
030130	Window Replacement, FHOB	BIM-SHL	HOB	RIngram	3,710,000	....	30	20	60	20	130	
930281D	Public Restrooms Upgrade, South Stack, HSOB	BIM-INT	SOB	KOlmsted	2,400,000	10	20	40	20	....	90	
020100B	Public Restrooms Upgrade, Phase I, FHOB	BIM-INT	HOB	KOlmsted	1,500,000	10	20	40	20	....	90	
960043	Off-Site Delivery/Screening Facility, USCP	BIM-GEN	USCP	WPerlenfn	23,000,000	....	....	....	....	....	....	
	SUBTOTAL—Sections 1 and 2				104,810,000	....	....	....	....	....	....	
	SECTION 3—SUPREME COURT PROJECTS [2]											
030302	Building Security Upgrade, SC	BIM-SEC	SC	ACopeland	1,800,000	....	20	30	20	90	160	(5)

	SUBTOTAL—Section 3				1,800,000						
	TOTAL—Sections 1, 2 and 3				106,610,000						

[1] "Project Costs" shown represent funding as identified in the fiscal year 2006 Budget Request; with the exception of the last three projects in Section 2, "Project Costs" are "Final Project Estimates" as developed by the AOC's Cost Estimating Group based on completed drawings and a completed Project Check List.
[2] Projects receiving a score of "90" or higher in one or more of the Project Evaluation Categories are considered highly desirable for accomplishment within the fiscal year identified.
[3] Project Nos. 970711E and 970711F have been separated into two parts so as to accommodate notation of costs associated with each building comprising the project.
[4] Original funding request in fiscal year 2005 was $2 million; only $1 million was approved; this project covers the additional $1 million still needed to accomplish the project.
[5] This is the Second Phase of a 2-phase project; the 1st phase was approved in the fiscal year 2005 LICP of the Supreme Court.

Senator ALLARD. Senator Durbin.

Senator DURBIN. Thank you, Mr. Hantman. And, being a liberal arts major, I don't have a clue what that chart means, so I'm just going to ask you some general questions here. What's the final cost of the Capitol Visitor Center?

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER COST CHANGES

Mr. HANTMAN. The final cost of the visitor center, as being projected by GAO right now, is $517 million.

Senator DURBIN. Can you recall the first estimated cost and what the difference might be?

Mr. HANTMAN. The original estimate for the visitor center, set back in 1998, was $265 million.

Senator DURBIN. And if you were asked, and you're about to be, how would you explain the difference?

Mr. HANTMAN. I think that one of the charts we can put up right now is one—as the chairman mentioned earlier, the Government Accountability Office has been sitting with us since the inception of the job. This is basically, a report that they are just putting out right now, which talks about the summary of the construction cost increases.

The first bullet talks about three-quarters of the $250 million increase is due to "factors beyond, or largely beyond, the AOC's control." Scope additions is the first item. The first is the House and the Senate expansion space. When the original project was designed, Mr. Durbin, we were going to be designing just shells, just the concrete floors, no electrical, no mechanical systems. There was no program to tell us what the Senate space might ultimately be, what the House space might ultimately be. After 9/11, we were given $70 million to finish off those spaces. That was without a program, without a design. As the design evolved, as the House and the Senate approved the programs and we went out to bid on those, that $70 million was found to be low, in terms of the quality of materials and the type of program that we were directed to do. So even that $70 million was not inadequate, but that essentially added to the base of $265 million. New scope of work.

The next bullet item is the security and life-safety enhancements. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Cochran, this project has really lived through the same type of loss of innocence, if you could say, that our country has, due to the 9/11 attacks and the anthrax attack on the Senate office buildings. We have seen multiple infusions of new dollars for new criteria go into this project.

Another one of the changes, certainly after the anthrax incident, was, to redesign our mechanical room once again to incorporate major filtration systems to take care of the type of threats that we were facing.

Security threats throughout the history of this project have been added to its costs, just as Homeland Security has been adding to their responsibilities. And the big challenge, Mr. Durbin, that we've had on this project has been that it's no longer the same project we started with. We're talking about adding $140 to $150 million of new work to the project that we had to do, while we were under contract. After the design was done, we had to try to get change orders and all of this new work incorporated and still try to meet a schedule for an inaugural in 2005. And that basically became fairly impossible to do with all the mechanical changes.

So, these changes forced us, basically, to split what we anticipated originally as a single contract for the whole project into several pieces. First of all, we split it into a preconstruction contract so that our construction manager, Gilbane, could remove all of the utilities from inside the footprint of the project, so that we would not slow up the work of the major contractors, to come later. Then, because of the multiple redesigns of the mechanical spaces, we had to break out the excavation, the foundations, the structural work so that we could begin to work on that right away and try, still, to keep our schedule to complete this project within the parameters of the 2005 inaugural. So, that contract went ahead.

In the next contract, which we were redesigning for the changed mechanical spaces, we gave a criteria to the bidders to meet the 2005 inaugural. Out of five bidders, three dropped out, saying that was impossible. And in order to change—to at least retain competitive bidding, we said, okay, we need to support the inaugural in 2005, we recognize we're not going to be finished, and we need to work on an extended schedule to be able to do that. And that's essentially what we did. We did a top-down construction, put on all the granite. The President actually stood on the central rotunda steps, as you know, and the troops passed in review. We got that work done.

So the challenge has been——

Senator DURBIN. That was a pretty expensive review, wasn't it?

Mr. HANTMAN. In terms——

Senator DURBIN. Never mind. We set that as your goal. And I know you were living up to it. And I'm glad we did it. It apparently called for additional work and expense. And you lived up to your responsibility there. The President—the inaugural went off, I think, flawlessly in that regard, except for the outcome of the election, which I won't get into.

Let me ask you, when will the CVC be open to the public?

Mr. HANTMAN. Our construction schedule calls for us to be completed in the fall of 2006. We're looking at—our contractor schedule talks about September 2006 right now.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER FTES

Senator DURBIN. So why would you have such a dramatic increase in a request for FTEs if we're—for this next fiscal year, when the CVC won't be open until the very end of that fiscal year?

Mr. HANTMAN. We're actually phasing that in, Mr. Durbin. We're taking a look at—right now, our operations plan—and we have consultants, Zell Corporation, that came in, folks who are experts in visitor flow and operations of major spaces like this, and we've been meeting with Emily Reynolds and people from the Capitol Preservation Commission, 1½ years now, with the Zell group. What they're recommending is that we actually have an executive director for that group and a core staff. They should be onboard right now, basically, planning for the ultimate phasing in of the 260 people that Zell projects will need. And that executive director could certainly look at the Zell report and say that that number is off this way——

Senator DURBIN. These 260 are for the CVC exclusively.

Mr. HANTMAN. That's correct.

Senator DURBIN. And you're asking for those FTEs in this year's fiscal appropriation, though the center will not be open until September of this next fiscal year?

Mr. HANTMAN. We have authorization now, I believe, for 16 of those 260 people. And of those 16, what we've started to do is actually hire—rather interview people—we can't hire them until we have an obligation plan signed for us—the people who are looking at the operations of the building. Potentially an assistant superintendent for the Capitol Building so that he or she could get together a staff that will make sure that the mechanical systems, the electrical systems, all of the things that are being installed correctly. They will be able to review that, be familiar with the systems when the building is essentially turned over. Those are the first people we want to bring on.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER COMPLETION AND OPERATIONS

Senator DURBIN. Open to the public September 2006 is what you're saying?

Mr. HANTMAN. From a construction perspective. From an operational perspective, Senator, the issue is, we have not yet hired that executive director. We've not been authorized to bring on any staff to do the operations side of it. We need that component, as well, so that whatever the operations group brings to the building, we'll be able to integrate it.

And I don't know if, Ms. Reynolds, you have anything to say about that. We talked about this just this Monday evening.

Senator ALLARD. If I might interrupt, Senator Durbin, and follow up on this, you're certain, from a construction aspect, that September 2006 would be when it's completed, open for occupancy.

Mr. HANTMAN. That will depend, again, on the operations team, when they come on and what kind of work they can do early enough. In the best of all possible worlds, Mr. Chairman, this operations group would come on, and they would work in parallel with us, in terms of their programs—and the hiring that they need to do to get their staff together.

STRATEGIC PLAN NEEDED

Senator ALLARD. Do you have a strategic plan in place where, when you reach this stage, we have some assurance that there's a step-by-step approach on how everybody's going to move into the offices and, a time schedule in which you anticipate that's going to happen? If you could elaborate further on whether you have the strategic plan.

Mr. HANTMAN. Two points. First of all, let me clarify the September date again, in terms of construction. We have not gotten authority yet to award the expansion space for the House, for the Senate, for the exhibits.

So I'm not sure. As soon as we can award that, we can assess what their completion date for those components of it will be. But in terms of the operations of the visitor center, the Congress has not yet determined who will be responsible for operating the visitor center, who they will report to, what committee they will report to;

and, therefore, no decision has been made whether it will be an AOC responsibility or it will be another committee's responsibility, another group.

Senator ALLARD. And why aren't those decisions being made?

Ms. REYNOLDS. With your permission, let me just add a note here, Mr. Chairman.

Those decisions have not been made. They are an ongoing discussion between Senate leadership, House leadership, and members of the Capitol Preservation Commission. They've been going on for several months now, most predominantly at the staff level, obviously with feedback to the respective members.

I think, clearly, if we're looking at an 2006 opening date, clearly the need for those decisions is sooner, rather than later. Suffice it to say, we're working closely with the Architect on it, and it's—this is another one that's a team effort. We'd certainly appreciate your advice and counsel on this, as well, but, again, being done at the leadership level and with the Capitol Preservation Commission.

Senator DURBIN. Mr. Chairman, I just might say that we hold our witnesses and agencies accountable. Now we ought to hold ourselves accountable. I think the leadership on both sides of the Rotunda need to get together immediately and work this out. And I know it's contentious, and it hasn't been easy, but we can't blame them if the CVC doesn't open because we can't explain who's going to be in charge and make these key decisions. So, if you would like to reach out to Senator Frist, I'll reach out to Senator Reid, and let's see—Senator Cochran—maybe we can get some movement here on this.

Senator ALLARD. I do think that we need to sit down with the leadership and put together some kind of strategic plan on how we're going to go through this and make these decisions, step by step. Has any kind of proposal been made to the leadership at all from your office? Have we suggested anything to them? Say, "Look, we think this is realistic now. Can you agree to this?" Have we taken that step?

Ms. REYNOLDS. We took a step about 6 months ago, I think, and went back to the leadership with—not so much with an overall governance proposal, but we did provide to the leadership on both the Senate and the House side, really, more of an update, a working update, as a result of the operational meetings that have been held over the course of the last year with Zell, with this consultant, and really just looking broadly at the organization itself. As I said, the conversations have taken place over the last few months, with both Senate and House officers and staff. Obviously, this—because it is an extension of the Capitol, this will be, presumably, a decision of the joint leadership and the CPC, of course, which has members from both sides.

We've made progress. We are not yet prepared, I will say, at least at the staff level, with an overall recommendation. Again, we'd be—I'd love the opportunity to brief you all on the various and different proposals that have been made, the various and different discussions. And, you're absolutely right, this is one that needs our time and attention.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Senator ALLARD. Mr. Hantman, I know when the project started out we had a couple of different contractors, and they didn't get along very well at the very start. Do we have an overall contractor that's in charge right now? It seems to me one of the things that needs to happen in a project, you need to have one contractor that's in charge, and you put incentives in place for them to perform and carry out what they say they will do. And it seems to me if we have one contractor who's in charge, he can be helpful to the staff in putting together some sort of strategy on how we can get this thing wrapped up in a timely manner, while holding down our costs.

Mr. HANTMAN. Mr. Chairman, with the help of the General Services Administration, we conducted a nationwide search for a construction manager. We hired the Gilbane Corporation to be that construction manager and make sure that they coordinated the work of all of our contractors on the job. Our first-phase contractor for the excavation, for the structure, for all of that work, Centex Corporation, has completed their work. They're off the job. Our second-phase contractor, who is doing all the electro-mechanical and architectural finishes work, is Manhattan Corporation. And, in terms of coordination for the expansion spaces, to minimize complications, we're expecting that they, also, would be running the work, although we go for competitive bids on the expansion spaces, on the exhibit areas, things of that nature.

So, yes, we do have people in place, both from Manhattan and the Gilbane side, and we are giving whatever advice that we possibly can to the Capitol Preservation Commission about what's going to be in place at what point in time, and how we can phase this work, so that we can get that center opened appropriately and in good order.

Senator ALLARD. Well, then, who's ultimately accountable for getting this done on time? Is this Gilbane?

Mr. HANTMAN. Our construction manager, Gilbane, is accountable to us. We have the fiduciary responsibility, certainly. And under our project executive, Bob Hixon, they report through to Bob Hixon, and Bob Hixon reports through to me.

Senator ALLARD. Gilbane—are they doing their job? It seems to me this is their responsibility, to help you put together a strategic plan. Are they doing their job in that regard?

Mr. HANTMAN. Well, in terms of strategic plan, relative to operations, that is not their responsibility. It is the construction side of it only, Mr. Chairman.

Senator ALLARD. Go ahead, Senator Durbin.

Senator DURBIN. Are there any incentives or penalties in the contract with Gilbane, for performance?

Mr. HANTMAN. For the contractors, we have liquidated damages. For Gilbane, they are a fee-based organization, and if they're not performing—it's up to us, basically, to make sure that they do perform or to take away work from them and give it to somebody else who can perform, when they don't.

Senator DURBIN. How much has Gilbane been paid?

Mr. HANTMAN. I believe it's something like $15.5 million for the CVC Base and $2 million for the Senate shell.

Senator DURBIN. Okay.

Mr. HANTMAN. I can verify that number.

[The information follows:]

As previously stated, I would like to verify the information referring to the amounts paid to Gilbane. In reference to the CVC base contract with Gilbane $15.5 million has been obligated and $13 million has been paid or expended. For the Senate shell space $2 million has been obligated and $1.6 million has been expended.

Senator DURBIN. But there are no incentives for them, as the management side of this. The incentives relate to the actual construction.

Mr. HANTMAN. We have incentives for the contractors, in terms of—if they meet their schedules, they move ahead. We have awards for them, yes.

Senator ALLARD. You know, it's not entirely clear to me who figures out the costs and the timeline schedule. Is that Gilbane, or is that your office or one of the contractors? Who puts that schedule together and says that it gets us to September, gets us to some kind of date after that, which we don't seem to be able to get specified.

Mr. HANTMAN. Gilbane has the responsibilities for the master schedule. We have a schedule that came in from Manhattan Corporation, who is the contractor onsite now charged, basically, with all the work to finish the job. The issue, then, is—what Gilbane needs to do is take the schedules for the expansion space, for the exhibit areas, areas that we've not yet awarded, integrate them into a schedule, and make sure that we can all finish when we need to finish.

Senator ALLARD. And why haven't those other spaces been awarded yet?

Mr. HANTMAN. We need to have obligations plans signed by the House and the Senate to allow us to spend the dollars to do that, and we've not yet got those signatures.

Senator ALLARD. I see. Okay.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER SCHEDULE

Senator DURBIN. Mr. Chairman?

If I might ask Mr. Hantman—the GAO, when they took a look at this, agreed with your final cost figure, but disagreed with the occupancy—or maybe not disagreed, but said they felt that, by schedule, it wouldn't be completed until March 2007. Do you take issue with that date that they came up with?

Mr. HANTMAN. Again, when we talk about the project, if we could define the nature of the project. The Capitol Visitor Center portion of it, the area that will welcome visitors, where people will walk down the entry ramps—and I'd welcome the opportunity to take you on a tour, Mr. Durbin—be screened, come into the great hall, go to the information booths, go see the orientation film, go on the tour, go to the cafeteria, go to the restrooms—all of that is projected in the current contracts that we have with Manhattan Corporation. The part that has not yet been awarded, and the part that will not be ready, at this point in time, in the fall of 2006, is, in fact, the expansion space, which has not yet been awarded. And that's where GAO is going and pushing that off. And until we get the contractor onboard and we work with them, we don't know what the schedule is for that work.

Senator DURBIN. And the contractor decision depends on leadership in Congress to decide responsibility——

Mr. HANTMAN. We have bids on that now, Senator. The issue is—we can't award those bids, because we don't have the obligation plans signed to award them. Then we could move ahead and move with that contractor to nail down a completion time.

Senator DURBIN. Okay.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER EXHIBITION SPACE

Senator ALLARD. Well, are there other things, other than the expansion space, that could be causing a delay on this project?

Mr. HANTMAN. The exhibit areas, Mr. Chairman. There's a wonderful exhibit area, which I showed you as we walked through—and, again, I'd welcome the opportunity for anybody who's not seen it, to take them through that again—we have not been able to award the contract for the construction of the exhibition areas. The Secretary of the Senate and the whole senior staff on the Capitol Preservation Commission, has the concern of, should we open the visitor center if the exhibition area is not ready to be opened, as well? And that's a debate that the Preservation Commission staff have been having. From my perspective, the best of all possible worlds, it should all be ready. We should be able to have full exhibits, have the air-conditioning system tested, so the original documents, amendments to the Declaration, amendments to the Constitution, all of those original documents that we're planning to put into the exhibition area, would safely be able to be installed there. We need to award the contract and move ahead and see just how we can shake it out. We still think we can make that.

Senator ALLARD. I want to move on, but Ms. Reynolds, did you want to respond?

Ms. REYNOLDS. I just wanted to add a word to what Mr. Hantman said, in terms of bringing the documents into the building and readying the exhibition space. And I certainly appreciate the commitment and the drive that the Architect has to get this facility up and running for all of us. It will be tremendous when it's done. But from an archival standpoint, both the Clerk of the House and I have the responsibility to work with the National Archives, who, of course, are the repository of the records of Congress. So one thing we would like very much to do—and I believe we have a meeting scheduled in this regard—is to have Mr. Hantman fully brief both the Archives and the Library of Congress, from whom we anticipate we will also borrow some documents, so that those preservationists, those archivists, can understand both the project in full, how the work will proceed, potentially, around the exhibition space, so that they have the assurance, before they loan precious documents to us, that they have the assurance and feel good about the prospect that those documents will be protected in this exhibition space if we still have ongoing work going on in other aspects of either the CVC or the expansion space itself.

So, again, we'll keep you posted on that, but I think we have one additional important step to make, if you will, and I certainly didn't want to leave the impression that there's a delay, if you will, from our end. But we do have that responsibility, to protect the records of Congress, and need to make that one additional stop with those archival experts.

Senator ALLARD. I think it would be helpful for this subcommittee if we can get some sort of timeline set down here with some estimated costs, and then we can check it off as we go along. And if for some reason AOC doesn't meet the timeline, we can ask why. And if you're under budget, we can have a celebration, when we reach those various milestones. I think a lot of Members in the Senate would feel more comfortable if we could have some sort of timeline out there to get things nailed down as best as we possibly can.

Mr. HANTMAN. Absolutely.

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL MANAGEMENT

Senator ALLARD. I think it would make life much easier.

The other thing that I would want to bring up, there's an article here about the AOC staff survey, and your staff expressed some dissatisfaction. I think you need to have workers that have bought into what you're doing. Noting some of the things several employees expressed concern about charges of favoritism and uneven and unfair work distribution, hire and promotions that were not necessarily based on qualifications and experience but based on personal connections. Those are the kind of comments that have been pulled out and that I have before me here. Is that a problem that you think truly exists? And even if it's a few employees, perhaps it is something to correct. I'd like to know what your suggestions are in that regard.

Mr. HANTMAN. Mr. Chairman, we take those kind of charges very seriously, and we investigate every one of them. What we have tried to do, over the 8 years that I have been here, is to create a human resources division that is responsible, not only to external clients, but to internal clients. Our staff are the backbone of the agency. The AOC is a service agency, and the 2,000 people we have essentially are our most valuable commodity. So, we are making sure that we have fair and open hiring practices, promotion practices, that we post jobs between jurisdictions, which never used to happen. Basically—somebody who worked for the House office buildings wouldn't apply for a job in the Senate office buildings. They do that now. We make sure that the benefits are the same. If you're doing the same work, you get the same benefits. The classification of all jobs are just the same. So anytime that we hear something like that—and I hear it, I will talk to people, we will talk to our human resources folks and make sure that we get a full answer and that these people are treated as fairly as possible within the guidelines of the Federal Government-type regulations.

Senator ALLARD. I do recognize there is a challenge——

Mr. HANTMAN. There is.

Senator ALLARD. But I'd encourage you to sit down and work with the employees and see if we can get it resolved. It sounds to me like maybe you've made some efforts in that regard, and I appreciate that.

Mr. HANTMAN. If I could make a statement, Mr. Chairman, that was a very disturbing newspaper article. The headline was "Fear and Loathing in the AOC.” Those are very, very heavy words. I had our folks go back to all the surveys. First of all, please be aware, we initiated 25 task groups; 300 people around our agency from all areas were invited in to talk, to give their points of view in an open manner, with an outside facilitator, impartial people, to talk about, what was wrong with their jobs. We wanted to know basically what the problems were, what the challenges were, how we can start addressing those challenges. We also conducted a survey that went across the entire agency, talking about the quality of services and how we can improve them.

As a result of the surveys we’ve set up eight committees on communications—no question about that, we have to improve our communications—human resources, procurement, senior leadership, strategic planning, all of these issues. We have groups that have been set up to address these issues.

But I think it’s important to note that we went back to the surveys, and we studied these words that we saw. And the word “loathing,” “repercussions,” “payback,” those with negative connotations did not appear in any of the surveys that came back from our employees. Ninety-six employees, out of 215 participating, used the word “fear.” But the word “fear” was used regarding their concern about having their jobs outsourced following a study we’re conducting as a congressional mandate. They did not use it in the context of fear in the workplace. I’m thinking that, clearly, there are some people who are not open enough or secure enough to express their opinions. We had a celebration for people who have Government service of, 30 to 35 years, last week. And I told the people in the labor division who were talking there that we want them to speak openly and talk about that. But I think it’s important to note that that headline had nothing to do with what the surveys and the focus groups showed.

So, basically, our conclusion really is, the journalist’s choice of words were the journalist’s choice of words. The fear was—related to outsourcing, not to the way people are treated. Most people stated that they liked their jobs. There was certainly room for improvement in communications and other areas, but it was a totally inappropriate headline.

Senator ALLARD. I wanted to give you an opportunity to respond to that, because I think that you needed to have that opportunity.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE REPORT

Now, let me go on to the GAO report. And I know you have a chart over here. You just must be itching to use that chart.

I want to give you an opportunity to respond to some of the criticism from the GAO report, and I think that’s what that chart’s all about. So why don’t you go ahead and respond to those comments from the GAO report?

Mr. HANTMAN. Mr. Chairman, the Capitol Visitor Center, I call it a magnificent challenge. It truly is that. As I indicated earlier Senator Durbin, the nature of the project has changed significantly since its inception, adding roughly $150 million of new work to the project as it was under design and construction.

If we could put the GAO summary of reasons back again, please.

The GAO does talk about management. They talk about—we could have done a better job doing management. In retrospect, when you look at the issues that we have to deal with, managing all the changes, the multiple changes—from the security perspective, from the expansion perspective—we needed to manage them, and we could have managed them more effectively, but we have managed them very well right now.

So where we talk about three-quarters of the $250 million increase due to factors, "beyond, or largely beyond, AOC's control," that's GAO's language, "77 percent of their $250 million increase was beyond our control." The next line talks about design-to-budget items impacted by market conditions.

The market volatility—since the budget for the House and the Senate expansion spaces was established in 2001, there have been material price increases. We have two estimates done for every piece of costs, Mr. Chairman. One of them is done by Gilbane, our construction manager; another is done by an outside firm, Hanscomb Corporation. We compared the two estimates for the work. With the escalating costs, the Hanscomb group indicates, in the Washington metropolitan area, some 22 percent escalation has occurred within the last 12 months, alone. So when you've established a budget years ago, and you see that kind of escalation, the $35 million budget set for each of the expansion spaces for the House and the Senate did not conceive of that level of additional dollars. So that has impacted us tremendously.

Limited competition due to a saturated construction market. You can see construction cranes all over the Washington metropolitan area. The pool of labor is down. The competitive bidding is down also, because there's enough work to go around, and contractors don't have to cut their prices; they can pick their jobs.

Added costs to bidders due to security. As you know, Mr. Chairman, we have trucks being checked on The Mall. Thousands of trucks are being inspected by—and going through a big screening area—by the Capitol Police. They're double-checked when they come onto First Street, before they come on site. All of the workers that come onto our site are screened. They undergo retinal scans and police background checks. People in the construction industry who have a police record are not able to work on our job. That's a premium that contractors add to their contracts.

Added—low estimates, and design not changed to meet the budget. When our numbers have come in higher than we anticipated, higher than our outside contractors and cost estimators have said, we come up with lists of things that could be eliminated from the project, could be changed. One of the things, which you may be aware of, we have a Buy America situation. If we had been able to bid our stone work on the international market, our contractors tell us, we could have saved $10 million. We have stone from Tennessee, from Ohio, from Pennsylvania. We fabricate in Wisconsin, in Vermont. All of this is American, and we're paying for that premium.

So the issue is, we could cut out some of that stone, we can go to sheetrock, we can go to wood. What we're doing here, Mr. Chairman, is, we're building for the future. This is not a speculative office building. This is not a normal building. This is something that complements and supports the Capitol that's survived for 200 years; and, with the good Lord's grace, will survive for hundreds more. So this is a complement. It supplements what, in fact, is happening in the building. And the quality of the finishes—the stone, the bronze work, there is stone on the floor, there are quality woods, there are materials that make sense, and that your great-grandchildren will be proud to visit in future years. So, if we come up with lists of things to cut because our numbers come in high, we are told, no, we cannot cheapen the work. And I don't want to cheapen it, either.

So the budget cannot be, as a normal job would be, one where you cut things out, you change it, you eliminate components of it. That is not an option open to us right now. So we are living with what the—essentially, the industry tells us the costs are going to be by those who choose to bid our projects.

Senator ALLARD. Based on the GAO report and your experience up to this point, what have been your lessons learned? If you were to start back over with the project again, what would you do differently to make it a better project than what it is today?

Mr. HANTMAN. Mr. Chairman, any architect or engineer who does a major project, and it's underway, under construction, has a tremendous fear of the words, "While you're at it, why don't you"—add a piece to the exhibit areas, add new security criteria, change this, do a change order to your contract, because I don't like the way that's coming in. With the outside pressures we've had since 9/11, Mr. Chairman, nobody could have foreseen all the security issues that we have.

As far as the expansion spaces are concerned, there's no doubt in my mind that those were meant to be future expansion spaces. When 9/11 hit, we got the money to finish them off, we made basic changes. We had to redesign our structure so that hearing rooms could have the long spans that they now have while they were under construction basically, this is in terms of the structure.

So have your programs set on everything that you're going to do. Go to a single contractor—that was our original goal, but, because of the timeframe—and that was the timeframe that Senator Durbin referred to—we had this inaugural date to hit. It turned out to be impossible once all of these $150 million worth of changes were put in the project. Yet, we were still driving our contractors to do that, and we put out bids on that basis. We shouldn't have put out bids on that basis. We should have recognized earlier that that's a criteria that will lose us the bidders and the competitiveness of the bidding process.

Senator ALLARD. I think that's a comment well made. As soon as you start changing the original order, you open up the contract, and it just becomes a blank check, and it's very difficult to control costs once you've done that. I've been in the position where I had a construction project. You know, I was building a veterinary hospital. And as soon as I started requesting a change here or there, you just open the whole thing up. And I can imagine, with this size of a project, that's a huge, huge issue. Do you think there might be any more major changes coming forward that could impact cost?

Mr. HANTMAN. Well, as was indicated in your opening remarks, GAO, last time around, when we came before the subcommittees for costs, they said, “There’s further risk out there.” GAO still indicates that there is further risk out there. Hopefully, not on the magnitude that we’re talking about to date.

We need to award the contracts that we have yet to award, and make sure that we can move ahead as expeditiously as possible. That’s the best way to control the costs.

Senator ALLARD. Mr. Chairman, do you have any questions or comments while we wrap this up?

Senator COCHRAN. Mr. Chairman, I’m very glad that we’ve had an opportunity to have this exchange, and the question and answers have been very informative and helpful to our understanding of where we are with the visitor center project and the responsibilities of these fine individuals, who serve as Architect and Secretary of the Senate. We appreciate your service and your cooperation with our efforts to help make sure we’re getting what we’re paying for and we are not being frugal and living up to our responsibilities to the general public and to the Congress, itself, and the American people, in particular.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator ALLARD. Mr. Chairman, I couldn’t agree more with your comments, and I also understand the frustration when you have numerous bosses, like the Architect of the Capitol has. We all have our own views, and I understand the challenges of your position, but I do think the more we can get down as a plan, the better off we’d all be so we can understand that. So, again, I would encourage you to get something in writing to us, some kind of a plan. It would be helpful, I think, for the subcommittee.

I agree with the chairman, this has been a very helpful hearing, from both of you. And I know there’s a lot of dedicated people here that want to do the right thing for Congress, and want to do the right thing for the people. We do want this to be something we’re all proud of, and I do see a lot of things in that visitor center that are just great. I want to make sure we can get through this with as few bumps as we possibly can toward completion.

I want to thank all of you for your effort. Thank you.

Mr. HANTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. REYNOLDS. Thank you.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

Senator ALLARD. And I would request, of the witnesses, that, within 1 week, if you could respond to additional questions in writing, then we’ll make those a part of the record.

[The following questions were not asked at the hearing, but were submitted to the Offices for response subsequent to the hearing:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO EMILY REYNOLDS

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR WAYNE ALLARD

Question. What are your recommendations for the closed captioning of Senate hearings based on the pilot project your office conducted in conjunction with the Judiciary Committee?

Answer. In September, 2003, the Office of the Secretary, in coordination with the Judiciary Committee, agreed to implement a pilot program for the closed captioning of Senate committee hearings, based on language included in the fiscal year 2003 Legislative Branch Appropriations report.

The pilot is summarized based on the request given to us by your committee to assess the feasibility, use and cost of the closed captioning pilot for committee hearings.

The original plan called for the pilot to run for a period not to exceed 90 days with the Secretary's Office of Captioning Services to provide the hardware and software using voice recognition technology, a technology selected at the suggestion of the Judiciary Committee. The Judiciary Committee provided funding for the product contract.

The Secretary's office invested almost $18,000 in support of the project, which included equipment and training. In addition, the director of captioning services served as the project manager and provided extensive counsel and training. A room on the mezzanine level of Hart 216 was prepared and furnished by the Architect of the Capitol and the Sergeant at Arms for the captioners' work given the need for a noise-free environment. The Senate Recording Studio also assisted in providing the necessary feed and encoding equipment.

The project concluded on October 6, 2004, following the completion of two captioned hearings for the Judiciary Committee. Unfortunately, the project encountered delays involving both the contractor and the technology, which eventually led to the selection of a second contractor in order to complete the pilot.

The first contractor began work on January 21, 2004, and conducted its first dry run on a committee hearing on February 25. A second dry run followed approximately one week later on March 3. The contractors were not familiar with the realtime captioning software, and on-site training was provided. In addition, software bugs with the technology had to be addressed and remedied. The contractors also experienced numerous hardware problems, making it difficult to determine at times whether the problems were software or hardware related. An overall lack of experience in the use of voice recognition technology led to a high error rate, so high the captions could not be understood.

The Judiciary Committee opted to terminate their contract with the first contractor in mid-March, 2004, and proceeded to engage a second operator just over one month later. The second contractor began training in late August, and two dry runs of committee hearings were conducted in September.

The contractor employed the voice recognition technology on September 22 and again on October 6 to cover two Judiciary Committee hearings that were broadcast on the Senate's internal television committee channel. In the first hearing, the average percentage of sentences with recognition errors was 55 percent. In the second hearing, the captioners showed improvement with the technology reducing the average percentage with recognition errors to 42 percent. (As a standard of comparison, captioning services for Senate broadcasts posts an accuracy rate of 99 percent).

The second contractor's captioners continued to experience setbacks with both the software and hardware, and have rendered their opinion that at least currently, the realtime captioning project is not appropriate for Senate committee work, particularly given the unique language of the Senate and the requirement for accuracy.

The Secretary's office provided a means for the Senate community to respond to the pilot, with comments, creating an e-mail address, ccpilot@sec.senate.gov. Two e-mail notices were sent prior to the internal broadcasts of the two closed captioned hearings.

Four responses were received at the e-mail address. One was an inquiry as to how to access the hearing; a second was from a committee staffer inquiring further about the pilot. Two responses came from a Congressional Research Service staffer who suggested transcript corrections.

To the best of our knowledge, voice recognition technology has not yet been employed to realtime caption television programming. In addition, the availability of voice writers is minimal in the region, particularly those with captioning experience. While the technology may hold promise for the future, on the basis of the pilot project, it is not a feasible technology for the Senate's use at this time.

Question. What information can your office provide to Senate offices on employment compensation, hiring and benefit practices, particularly for those newly-elected Senators who are in the process of setting up shop? Would it be useful for Senate offices to have an outside organization study compensation, hiring and benefit practices for Senate staff, and in your view, would it be appropriate for us to fund such a study?

Answer. Two departments under the direction of the Secretary, the Disbursing Office and the Senate Chief Counsel for Employment (SCCE) can and do provide information to Senate offices, including newly-elected Senators' offices, regarding compensation, hiring and benefit practices.

With respect to hiring and benefit practices, the SCCE does the following: (1) informs offices about how and where to advertise job openings, how to interview candidates, how to conduct reference and background checks, how to establish appropriate criteria for selecting among job applicants, and how to finalize and document job offers; (2) provides each office with dozens of sample employee policies that are used across the Senate and assists the office with customizing the policies; (3) assists offices with preparing employee policy manuals and supervisors' manuals; (4) educates the offices about the range of benefits customarily offered by Senate offices, such as the number of days of paid leave, paid holidays, and paid FMLA leave, and assists offices in establishing their benefits; (5) educates the offices about all of their legal obligations and employees' legal rights under employment laws, which include compensation, hiring and benefit practices.

Like the SCCE, the Disbursing Office provides extensive and detailed information to newly elected Senators' offices during the Senators-elect orientation program and in one-on-one training with all new offices. The training includes both written and verbal information on the budget structure and available funds by fiscal year for the office, the salary limitations for the office, the appointment and hiring procedures including the statutory prohibitions on when appointments and transfers can be effective, other employment restrictions, procedures and requirements for salary adjustments and termination processing, guidelines and procedures for processing overtime and paying for unused annual leave, and any other relevant employment and payroll procedures. Counseling on all federal benefits (retirement, Thrift Savings Plan, health insurance, life insurance, flexible spending accounts) is also provided to all new Senate employees.

With respect to compensation, because each member's office is, by law, an individual employer, each office establishes its own salaries. Twice each fiscal year, the Report of the Secretary of the Senate is published in compliance with Section 105 of Public Law 88–454, approved August 20, 1964, as amended. The Report is a full and complete statement of the receipts and expenditures of the Senate.

Based on the work of both the Disbursing Office and the Senate Chief Counsel for Employment, it would be neither useful or necessary to hire an outside organization to study compensation, hiring and benefit practices. Because each office is an individual employer, employee positions and job responsibilities are not the same across offices, and salaries and benefits often reflect issues unique to each state. To the extent policies and benefits are common across offices, that information is already shared across, and provided to, Senators' offices.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO ALAN HANTMAN

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR WAYNE ALLARD

BUDGET

Question. AOC is in the process of conducting a mid-year review of the current year budget. Based on this analysis, do you believe there will be any funding this year that could be reprogrammed to any projects AOC is requesting in the fiscal year 2006 budget? If there are savings, please explain why.

Answer. The mid-year review resulted in satisfying some emerging fiscal year 2005 needs and a few fiscal year 2006 needs as well. The review identified potential sources of funding to pay the Botanic Garden claim, the closing costs for the ACF purchase and the Capitol Power Plant-Replace Ash Handling.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Question. In December 2003, AOC issued a strategic plan for the agency. How is the implementation of that strategic plan specifically affecting your organizational structure and the resources you need for fiscal year 2006?

Answer. Resources in terms of both dollars and FTEs are needed to continue to make progress in implementing improvements (outlined in our Performance Plan) in key areas such as project management, IT security, Enterprise Architecture, worker safety, financial controls, and employee communications. We have not requested additional FTEs to implement these improvements and have ensured that the dollars requested in our budget are aligned with our strategic action plans. As part of our internal process to develop our budget, we require each responsible manager to include discussion on how the requested budget is linked to accomplishing one or more of AOC's Strategic goals.

In addition, the AOC proposed organizational structure would allow us to more effectively manage day-to-day operations and achieve our strategic goals. It will facilitate delegations of authority and clarify lines of communications by formally recognizing the official management structure of the agency.

Question. In your testimony you say "we are continuously evaluating our efforts so that we continue to excel, meet and exceed expectations." On what basis can you say AOC is excelling, meeting and exceeding expectations?

Answer. The AOC is constantly reviewing our progress and looking for ways to improve our operations. Examples of improvements that allow us to excel, meet, and exceed expectations include:

—Financial Management
  —Developed a Management Control Program Policy—currently in the review and approval process. Implementation team is forging ahead as the policy receives final approval. The team has completed the initial review of the first two internal control cycles: payroll and procure-to-pay.
—Project Management
  —Implemented a "pilot" PM organization to align staff with mission critical goals.
  —Continued to implement a Program Development Process that includes the prioritization of projects by a senior-level panel comprised of all jurisdictional superintendents. The project prioritization process was most recently used in the summer of 2004 in conjunction with determining the fiscal year 2006 Line Item Construction Program (LICP) as recently submitted to The Congress.
  —Developed tools to effectively communicate priorities and progress of projects. Formal Program Development Process procedures have been developed and communicated to all parties through various means. Briefings have occurred. Portions of these procedures, as appropriate, have been included in AOC manuals. The process, to include its specific application to the recommended fiscal year 2005 Line Item Construction Program (LICP), has further been communicated through the AOC's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) prepared in February 2004. These procedures, to include their application to the recommended fiscal year 2006 LICP, are similarly being captured and communicated through the revised CIP currently nearing completion.
—Created an employee feedback process manual (undergoing final review of procedures for implementation).
—Conducted Focus Groups and a Human Resources Management Division Customer Satisfaction Survey—action plans are being developed to address opportunities for improvement especially in the areas of communication, on a wide variety of AOC issues, policies and procedures.
—Completed the 2004 Building Services Customer Satisfaction Survey (BSCSS) and reported findings and action plans to stakeholders.
—Linked senior executive and employee performance management systems to our strategic goals and objectives.
—Launched our workforce planning office which is currently developing a workforce plan/strategy to outline the process for AOC long-range workforce planning.
—Continued to implement IT Investment Management, Enterprise Architecture and Security programs.

Question. What are the most significant challenges you face in meeting your strategic plan goals and how does your budget attempt to address these priorities?

Answer. One of the biggest challenges we face, like many government agencies, is the aging of our workforce and the need to transfer knowledge to the next generation of skilled workers.

Maintaining our aging and historic facilities is another challenge we face. This is why the Facility Condition Assessment (FCAs) are so critical to achieving our Facilities Management Goal. The funding request for a FCA of the Library of Congress is an example of this.

In our fiscal year 2006 budget development process, we aligned the requests by budget line item to ensure our budget was consistent with the Strategic Plan goals and objectives. This was our first attempt to move towards a performance based budget. We are continuing to refine this process as we prepare future budgets.

As outlined in our strategic plan, a significant impact on the achievement of these goals is the time and money spent responding to data calls, and meeting with various groups that are conducting reviews of the AOC. The AOC staff is devoted to ensuring these various groups have the most accurate and complete information available to support the reviews.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER POSITION

Question. I understand you are working with a panel made up of the Public Printer, the Comptroller General, the Chief Administrative Officer of the House and someone yet to be appointed from the Senate Sergeant at Arms to select a new Deputy ACO/COO. Could you please explain to the committee the process you are using to review applicants and make a selection? Has the panel ever met to discuss and approve this selection process? Have criteria been established for use by the panel in evaluating candidates? Did the panel participate in the establishment of these criteria and approve them? When do you expect a selection to be made? How many people applied?

Answer. As instructed by the Committees, in mid-December, 2004, we initiated contact with several executive employment search firms to identify and select one to conduct a nation-wide recruitment for a new COO. After a review of several executive employment search firms, we contracted with Korn/Ferry International on December 22, 2004.

—Korn/Ferry initiated their recruitment search process and suggested that AOC also initiate a recruitment announcement through the Federal U.S.A. Jobs system.

—AOC staff coordinated the vacancy announcement language with Korn/Ferry and the announcement was posted from January 21 through March 4, 2005.

On March 15, 2005, candidate review criteria, developed by Korn/Ferry for their use to narrow the number of candidates to be referred to the panel, were submitted to the panel for review and input. Received input on the review criteria from each of the panel members, (last one dated March 30, 2005). In addition to the review criteria panel members also suggested steps they would like to follow in completing their review and interview of candidates.

On April 5, 2005, the panel was provided with a matrix documenting their input on the review criteria to be used by Korn/Ferry in completing the candidate review process. The panel was also provided information on suggestions they submitted for "next steps", and on information they requested from Korn/Ferry for the panel's review and interview of candidates.

On April 14, 2005, the Committees were sent an update on the process, including the matrix outlining the criteria that Korn/Ferry would use in their review of candidates; In addition, we have outlined the "next steps" that the panel wanted to follow for their review and interview of candidates.

While Korn/Ferry was completing their review of the candidates, the AOC began to work with the panel members' staff to block out times when the panel could convene to review and interview the candidates. Based on the initial information received on the panel members' availability, the earliest date when all the members could convene is May 26, 2005.

On April 28, 2005, I sent a letter to all the panel members asking that they review their calendars to see if they could meet before May 26. From the information received to date, the panel will have their initial meeting on May 17. Based on the travel schedule of some of the panel members, it currently appears that the next date they can convene is May 26. I anticipate that the panel will likely need to convene several times to complete their review.

On May 3, 2005, Korn/Ferry delivered the candidate books to the AOC and they in turn were delivered to the panel the next day.

Next steps (as suggested by the panel):

—The panel reviews the candidate information for the top 12 candidates that have been submitted to them.

—The panel narrows the number of candidates to a short list of best qualified.

—The panel interviews the best qualified to determine the top candidates (not less than three).

—The panel refers (not less than three) candidates for my consideration, interview and selection.

Completion of my part of the review and interview of candidates is dependent on the panel completing its work. If they cannot complete their review until late in May or early June, we may need an extension of time. If it appears that this will be necessary, I will make such a request for the Committee's consideration as soon as we have that information.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Question. Project management was one of the areas cited by the Government Accountability Office as needing improvement in its 2003 report on the AOC. What improvements have you made in this area and what specific examples can you cite of "lessons learned?" Over half of AOC's current construction projects over $250,000 are behind schedule. Why? What is AOC doing to control schedule overruns? I understand AOC established a pilot project management organization last September and that is an improvement over the old way of operating, including better accountability for managers. Why is it still a pilot and why are employees reporting to both their "old" boss and their "new" boss? Isn't it time to move ahead with this and finalize the structure, as recommended by GAO?

Answer. Organization Improvements: On September 1, 2004 the AOC implemented a "pilot" Project Management organization. This organization is comprised of Project Managers, Construction Managers, and Construction Inspectors. The proposed alignment establishes clear performance expectations for delivering high quality design and construction projects on time and within budget mainly because the project and construction management functions reside, for the first time, within the same organization. The alignment is based largely on recommendations and observations made by GAO, specifically to "align project management staff and resources with AOC's mission-critical goals" and that "too many hats" are being worn by those assigned project management responsibilities.

The pilot Project Management organization is tasked with delivering the projects identified through our Program Development Process that leads to the development of Capitol Improvement Plans. Smaller projects are managed by staff in the Engineering and Architecture Divisions, and some projects are managed directly by staff in the Superintendent's offices. In addition, there are four projects that are being managed by dedicated teams hired specifically for these one-time capital improvements efforts: the Capitol Visitor Center, the West Refrigeration Plant expansion, the Supreme Court Modernization, and most recently, the Hill-wide Perimeter Security program. Decisions as to who manages which projects are made jointly by Project Management, Architecture and Engineering and Superintendent's management staff. The primary goal, however, is to have the Project Management organization manage CIP projects, with the remaining project work being managed by others. Since September 1, 2004, an effort has been made to transition the aligned organization and its assigned workload while "bridging" those projects in transition to avoid losing institutional knowledge.

Lessons Learned: The AOC continues to show progress in using its best practices to successfully executing design and construction projects. Key findings from last year's Lessons Learned surveys (fiscal year 2004) concluded that the AOC needed to focus on project planning, scope development, and design coordination. In the ensuing months the AOC developed critical check lists and sign-off sheets to assure that all necessary project elements had been considered and appropriately addressed before proceeding. The Program Development Process leading to CIP development is serving as a gate-keeping mechanism to assure that inadequately-developed projects do not proceed forward in the funding request stream.

In addition, development and publication of the Program of Requirements (Predesign Manual) and assuring consistency with IDIQ design task Orders will also significantly improve project scoping and documentation before they are sent forward as part of developing the CIP.

Schedule Overruns: One of the key components to creation of the pilot Project Management organization was to establish clear performance expectations for delivering projects on time and within budget. Success in achieving these performance indicators is anticipated because the project and construction management functions reside, for the first time, within the same organization. When variances with schedule, quality or budget arise, the project team is required to work together in an attempt to overcome the variance and keep the customer apprised accordingly.

In addition, each of the jurisdictions at the AOC have been assigned a Jurisdictional Executive from the Project Management organization. Each Jurisdictional Executive acts as the liaison between the customer and the project-delivery organizations for resolution of project-related issues. The goal with this arrangement is to foster continuous communications and to keep projects moving forward on-time and within budget.

Although the pilot organization has made several positive steps with respect to project delivery and reporting, it must be recognized that achieving an optimal goal for "on schedule" is a multi-step and multi-year endeavor. As noted previously, many measures and processes have been put in place, but the AOC has not yet delivered a CIP project developed with the benefit of the Pre-design Manual, and there are additional refinements to the Program Development Process that need to be defined, such as creating an Acquisition Strategy process. The expectation that a seven-month-old organization can overnight correct problems inherent in projects developed years ago without benefit of the new processes and organizational structured and accountability is overly optimistic. GAO pointed out in its original General Management Review that such changes take years to accomplish in an orderly and measured manner. The AOC is confident that it continues to make steady progress in project delivery and reporting.

Pilot Organization Approval: On April 22, 2005, letters were sent by the Architect of the Capitol to both Appropriation's Committees, providing notification of his plan to implement a new organizational structure for the Agency. The proposed organizational chart delineated changes to the current, higher-level management structure, which in-turn would modify the reporting structure for the Project Management organization, upon implementation. The letters indicated that the proposed organizational structure would be implemented in May, unless other feedback was provided by the Committees. It was thought prudent to await the implementation of the higher-level management structure, before implementing the pilot organization. Subsequent feedback to the letters has been received by the Committees and the requested follow-on information is being provided. Procedures for implementation of the pilot organization will commence immediately after implementation of the AOC organizational structure.

When the pilot organization was established in September 2004, it was made clear to the impacted employees that their official management structure would remain unchanged and that supervisory actions such as performance evaluations would continue to be performed by their current supervisor. This direction has not changed. Communications between the Acting Director of Project Management and the management of the impacted employees are continuous in an attempt to minimize confusion and disruption to the staff. It is acknowledged that implementation of the pilot organization will eliminate any perceptions of a "dual" reporting structure for the employee.

PERIMETER SECURITY

Question. Approximately $120 million has been appropriated for perimeter security since 1999. I understand on the Senate side, the work is at least a year behind the schedule that we were given last year, with completion now planned for fall of 2007. Why has it slipped by a year? Will additional funds be required to complete the overall perimeter security work around the Capitol complex? How much and when is it needed?

Answer. Work was prioritized to complete those items necessary for the Inauguration. Completion of all remaining work presently funded is scheduled for fall of 2006, with the exception of First St., N.E., which will be complete in fall of 2007 and Maryland Avenue, N.E., which will be complete the fall of 2008. Additional funding will be required for the completion of perimeter security for the Capitol Complex. The total amount and date required, is needed as follows:

Jurisdiction	Funding Required	Date Required
Senate Office Buildings	$5,985,000	2007 Budget
House Office Buildings	4,319,000	August 2005
Supreme Court	2,885,000	2007 Budget
Library of Congress (Phase 1)	5,637,000	June 2005
Capitol Square [1]	8,200,000	June 2005
TOTAL	27,026,000	

[1] Supplemental.

MASTER PLAN AND FACILITY CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Question. In July 2001, this Committee directed AOC to develop a master plan for the Capitol complex since the existing master plan is 25 years old. What is the status of the master plan? AOC has also been working to develop condition assessments for each of the buildings. What is the status of that effort and what are the most significant capital requirements should we expect over the next 5 years?

Answer. In August 2004, a contract was awarded to a consulting team to undertake development of the Capitol Complex Master Plan. In December, a draft Vision Statement for the plan was completed and reviewed by an Expert Advisory Panel through meetings convened by the National Academies of Science and Engineering. Based on that meeting, the consultants moved forward with the development of various complex-wide concept plans. A second meeting with the Expert Advisory Panel was convened by the National Academies during the week of March 7, 2005 for the purpose of reviewing the various concept plans. We are now entering the stage where more detailed facility plans are developed for each jurisdiction. This will involve extensive interaction and consultations so as to accommodate each jurisdiction's facility needs within an overall Concept Plan for the Capitol Complex. The Capitol Complex Master Plan initiative is on schedule for completion in late 2006, and remains within budget.

Contracts for Facility Condition Assessments (FCAs) for the Capitol Building, House and Senate were completed in early 2005. Projects identified as a result of these studies will begin to appear with the AOC's submission of its fiscal year 2007 Budget Request. FCAs for all other jurisdictions, except for the Library of Congress, are ongoing with completion of the House, Senate, and Capitol scheduled for completion Spring 2005 and the remaining jurisdictions are scheduled for late 2005. Funding for the Library of Congress FCA was requested in the AOC's fiscal year 2006 Budget Submission and, subject to the receipt of funding, would start in the fall of 2005.

Capital Projects are classified as one of four types with Deferred Maintenance (DM), Capital Improvement (CI), and Capital Renewal (CR) identified primarily through FCAs while Capital Construction (CC), which is new construction of a building or construction that enlarges and existing facility, identified primarily through the Capitol Complex Master Plan. Because the Capitol Complex Master Plan is ongoing, and because 7 of the 10 jurisdictions do not yet have completed Facility Condition Assessments, it will be 2 to 3 years before a comprehensive and complete list of Major Capital Projects, defined as those over $10 million, will be available. In the interim, and based only on the three FCAs completed to date, the following Major Capital Projects, have been identified:

[Dollars in millions]

PROJ NO	PROJECT TITLE	COST RANGE	TYPE
HB05004A	Cable TV System Upgrade, Phase I, HOB	$10–20	CI
950042	Infrastructure Improvements, Phase I, DSOB	10–20	CI
SB05004A	Cable TV System Upgrade, Phase I, SOB	10–20	CI
000228	Fire Damper Installation, FHOB, RHOB & LHOB	10–15	CI
990347	480V Switchgear and Transformer Replacements, RHOB	10–20	CR
900265H	Dome Rehabilitation, Phase II, USC	50–60	CR
970280	Interior Renovations, HUGE & HUGW	40–50	DM
970279	Domestic Hot and Cold Water System Replacement, RHOB	10–25	DM
990364	Exterior Stone and Metal Preservation, USC	30–50	DM
970351	Subway Upgrade, RSOB to Capitol, RSOB	10–25	CI
030335	Emergency Evacuation and Notification System Upgrade, USC	10–25	CI
990401	Window Restoration and Replacement, USC	10–20	CR
970278	Heating System Conversion—Steam to Hot Water, LHOB	10–20	CR
980298	House Chamber Renovation, USC	25–50	CR
980050	HVAC System Upgrade, Phase 1, HOB	20–30	CR
980433	Garage Concrete Replacement , RHOB	20–40	DM
990402	Sprinkler System Installation, USC	40–50	CI
040234F	Fire Alarm System Upgrade, RHOB	20–30	CI
030320	Fire Damper Installation, DSOB	20–30	CI
030319	Smoke Management System Installation, HSOB	20–30	CI
030309B	Enhanced Filtration for Air Handling Systems, DSOB	70–90	CI
030309B	Enhanced Filtration for Air Handling Systems, RSOB	60–80	CI
030309B	Enhanced Filtration for Air Handling Systems, HSOB	30–40	CI
030309A	Enhanced Filtration for Air Handling Systems, LHOB	30–40	CI
030309A	Enhanced Filtration for AC1–15 & AC22–25, CHOB	25–35	CI
030309A	Enhanced Filtration for Air Handling Systems, FHOB	10–20	CI
000299	Smoke Management System Installation, RSOB	20–40	CI
980050	HVAC System Upgrade, Phase 2, HOB	20–30	CR
030004	Parking Garage, Lot 9, RHOB	30–40	CC

CAPITOL POWER PLANT

Question. GAO recently made recommendations to cut operating costs at the Power Plant. Do you have any plans to implement these recommendations in fiscal year 2006? How much funding might be saved by proceeding with GAO's recommendations?

Answer. The start-up, testing, and post construction activities for the expansion of the West Refrigeration Plant and the new plant central control system will commence in the 1st quarter of fiscal year 2006 and tentatively complete in the 3rd quarter. Due to the nature of these manpower intensive activities, it is unlikely that we will implement manpower changes until fiscal year 2007. The major cost saving recommendation for the efficient use of fuel has been implemented and we expect to save approximately $3,000,000 in fiscal year 2006.

FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY PROJECTS

Question. AOC has been provided close to $190 million in the past 5 years for fire and life safety projects to ensure the buildings in the Capitol complex meet appropriate codes and standards. How much more needs to be done and at what cost? What is the schedule for completion of all fire and life-safety related projects?

Answer. Considerable improvements in Fire Protection and Life Safety of the buildings in the Capitol complex have been completed and implementation of others continue throughout the complex. As shown in the Capital Improvements Plan there are numerous additional projects including fire alarm, smoke detector and fire sprinkler upgrades, emergency lighting and exit light upgrades, firefighter telephone installations, audibility and intelligibility upgrades, kitchen exhaust system upgrades, and egress improvements which remain to be completed. For fiscal year 2006 there are nine projects totaling $24,850,000. The total projected cost for projects included in fiscal year 2007 through fiscal year 2010 in the CIP ranges from $264 million to $499 million. It will take approximately 8 years to complete all currently defined projects. In addition, there are several egress studies and designs which will be completed in fiscal year 2007 for which cost and schedule projections cannot be made at this time.

CAPITOL POLICE OFF-SITE DELIVERY FACILITY

Question. The pending supplemental appropriations bill in the Senate includes $23 million as requested by the Capitol Police Board for a new off-site delivery facility for the police. This project was first identified as a "top 5 priority" in the Capitol Police 1999 Master Plan, yet the project has been very slow to gain momentum. It is now urgent with the new baseball stadium forcing USCP out of the current space within the year. Can you assure us that you will make this project a very high priority and obligate funds this fiscal year?

Answer. The safety and well-being of those who work in and visit the Capitol and the ability to facilitate the legislative process are our top priorities. To ensure we achieve these objectives, all items, for use in the Capitol complex undergo an inspection process prior to entering the Capitol perimeter. Having an acceptable Capitol Police Off-site Delivery Facility is critical to the entire community and our goal is to obligate the funds this fiscal year.

FORT MEADE STORAGE MODULES

Question. The budget includes $41 million for the construction of two additional storage modules for the Library of Congress at Fort Meade, MD. Could you explain the status of construction of the first and second modules at Fort Meade? I understand this is a long-term project, with many more modules to be constructed to meet the Library's storage needs. What is the total cost and timeframe for the Fort Meade storage modules project?

Answer. The first Book Storage Module is complete and the building is occupied. The second Book Storage Module is 98 percent complete and should be occupied by the latter part of May, 2005. The Library of Congress currently plans to design and contract a total of 13 High Density Book Storage Module at Fort Meade. If Modules 3 and 4 are appropriated in fiscal year 2006, the Library of Congress desires to construct a new Book Storage Module every two years. At this pace, the thirteenth module will be complete and ready for use in 2026. The total cost in current year dollars, excluding design fees, is expected to be as follows:

	Amount
Book Storage Module 1	$3,500,000
Water Tank	4,100,000
Book Storage Module 2	9,500,000
Book Storage Modules 3 & 4	40,700,000
Supporting Infrastructure	[1] 20,000,000
Book Storage Module 5	11,000,000
Book Storage Modules 6–13 ($11,000,000 each)	88,000,000
TOTAL	176,800,000

[1] To be split among all projects.

PRIVATIZATION

Question. I understand GAO has been asked to look at whether privatizing any AOC functions would make sense. Do you have any suggestions as to whether consideration ought to be given to contracting-out any of AOC's in-house functions?

Answer. We have been and will continue to look for areas that may be appropriate for consideration. We have outsourced a number of areas including trash and waste removal; shuttle bus service; pest control; some janitorial functions; a variety of A/

E support functions; information resources help desk operation and most of IRM's server support; lawn mowing and snow removal; several audit and accounting functions; art work conservation; emergency elevator repair; equipment repair and maintenance (fork lifts, floor machines); kitchen exhaust hood/duct inspection, testing and cleaning; testing, inspection and certification of elevators; testing and certification of fire alarm systems; testing and certification of fire extinguishers; and window cleaning. We are considering options to outsource facilities management of the ACF (assuming purchase) and for Capitol Police Buildings and Grounds; and outsourcing of replacement of high efficiency HVAC filters.

GAO MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Question. What is the status of AOC meeting GAO's recommendations from its 2003 review of the AOC relative to financial management improvements, including preparing auditable financial statements? What remains to be done in the financial management area? Are the resources, including staffing levels, in your budget request adequate to meet these requirements?

Answer. August 2004 report (GAO–04–966) says the following in relation to Auditable Financial Statement and Related Internal Controls: "The ability to prepare agencywide financial statements that, along with related internal controls, can be independently audited represents a key component of an organization's ability to institutionalize financial management best practices and establish a sound foundation of accountability and control. AOC has made progress in preparing agencywide financial statements; supporting an audit of its September 30, 2003, balance sheet; and establishing related internal control policies and procedures. As part of its efforts to prepare agencywide financial statements, AOC put in place internal control policies and procedures related to funds control, financial reporting, and inventory management, and is starting work on other actions to further enhance financial control and accountability."

Question. How has AOC improved its internal control framework, including establishing an environment in which management and employees maintain a positive and supportive attitude toward internal controls and conscientious management (see p. 41 of GAO/03/231)?

Answer. For the past two years as a part of our financial audit, our auditors have conducted a review of internal controls. All of their stated concerns have either been addressed or are being addressed. We are in the process of establishing an Internal Control Program. This program will assist us in establishing an "accountability" framework that will include training of all management employees on their responsibilities with respect to internal controls.

Question. What has AOC done to develop and communicate consistent human capital policies and procedures at all levels (p. 43 GAO/03/231), including provision of pay raises, bonuses, and awards?

Answer. As part of its Human Capital Plan, AOC has continued to re-write policies that need revision, or write new AOC wide policies that didn't previously exist. Listed below by fiscal year are the policies in supervisor's offices and available on AOC's intranet. For policies that have a direct impact on employees, hard copies are distributed to every AOC employee. To facilitate understanding of some policies, briefings are given to supervisors and/or employees where they are given an opportunity to ask questions. In addition, supervisors and managers use a variety of methods to communicate policies to their employees. As part of reviewing the focus group result findings, AOC management is currently considering other measures that should be taken.

	Date
Fiscal Year 2003:	
Determining Eligibility for Sunday Premium Pay	6/15/03
Performance Review Plan for Exempt Personnel	7/1/03
Hours of Duty	9/2/03
Fiscal Year 2004:	
Holiday Pay	11/21/03
Absence and Leave	12/5/03
Awards	12/19/03
Leadership Development Program	6/14/04
Clearance of Separating Employees	7/19/04
Fiscal Year 2005:	
Avenues for Assistance	10/04
Pay Under the Architect's Wage System	3/1/05

	Date
Career Staffing	Completed, awaiting approval
Performance Communication and Evaluation System	Completed, awaiting approval
Currently under development:	
Pay Under the General Schedule.	
Employee Development.	
Exempt Personnel.	

Question. Why did it take AOC 18 months from the time the GAO's report was issues, to initiate an employee survey, to begin to address GAO's recommendation to comprehensively collect and analyze data from employee relations groups?

Answer. GAO made the following recommendation in their January 2004 report "Gather and analyze employee feedback from focus groups or surveys before fiscal year 2005, as well as communicate how it is taking actions to address any identified employee concerns." The AOC addressed this recommendation in September 2004 by conducting employee focus groups. This was completed ahead of the GAO recommended date and in line with our Performance Plan.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER

Question. Several changes to the CVC contract appear to be due to a simple lack of coordination with both internal officials, such as the fire marshal, and other organizations including the Supreme Court. Why did this happen and what are you doing to prevent this in the future?

Answer. Several changes such as stair pressurization and fire damper monitoring are a result of professional disagreements between the Fire Marshal and the designer of life safety systems for the CVC. The uniqueness of a below grade building and inherent conflicts between the desire for increased security and the often inflexible nature of building code contributes to areas of disagreement on how to best handle life safety issues. These differences came about during normal review of building life safety systems as the details were developed.

The Supreme Court issue you are referring to is the requirement that the book tunnel between the Supreme Court and Library of Congress be undisturbed when the utility tunnel is constructed. Apparently the construction sequence requiring removal of the book tunnel for excavation of the utility tunnel and subsequent rebuilding was not known to Supreme Court security personnel, and could not be accommodated. We are proceeding to build the utility tunnel up to the book tunnel on both sides with minimal impact to the utility tunnel construction.

Question. Why was the Government responsible for all of the CVC Sequence 1 delay when monthly CVC progress reports indicated that the Sequence 1 contractor was not devoting sufficient resources to keep the project on schedule?

Answer. The CVC contract requires the government to compensate the contractor in time and money for delays cause by differing site conditions or owner changes that delay his work. Weather delay is compensable only with time. During negotiation with the Sequence 1 contractor and all of the subcontractors, a portion of the delay was attributed to weather. However, most of the delay was due to differing site conditions and changes to the Sequence 1 contract for added scope. These problems created inefficiencies that kept the Sequence 1 contractor from fully staffing the project while awaiting direction on corrective action.

Question. GAO's risk-based cost and schedule estimates for the CVC to date have been much more accurate than the AOC's or that of their construction management firm. What is AOC doing to integrate risk assessment in its future estimates?

Answer. The estimates prepared by AOC and our construction manager have been based on what was known at the time. We did not ask for additional funding beyond the needs that could be identified. The delay costs for Sequence 1 in Spring 2003 were based on the delay of a couple of months that had occurred to date, and did not contemplate an additional eight and a half months of delay to Sequence 1 that followed. There was also an expectation at that time that the delay impact on commencing Sequence 2 work would be minimal since it was felt the two contracts could be overlapped to make up most of the two month delay.

Today the risk is reduced to the delay in award of the Expansion space contract, the Exhibit construction contract, the House Connector tunnel and the Jefferson Building work. Had these contracts been awarded in February or March 2005, the risk would be minimal; however with the current delay in awarding those contracts, the impact is uncertain. The risk of differing site conditions remains for the House Connector tunnel and Jefferson Building.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Question. What steps is AOC taking to address concerns raised by the Comptroller General regarding AOC's organizational structure, in response to a letter (2/8/05) from the Architect seeking the CG's comments? Will AOC enable the CVC Project Director to report directly to the Architect?

Answer. We developed and submitted for your information a revised organizational structure incorporating most of GAO's recommendations after follow up discussions with the Comptroller General. The CVC director reports directly to the Architect.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER UTILITY TUNNEL

Question. According to GAO, over $1 million in additional costs was incurred due to AOC's indecision on how to construct the utility tunnel. Why did this happen?

Answer. The utility tunnel work in the Sequence 1 contract did not include new requirements by WASA for the tie-in of utilities at Second Street that was estimated to cost approximately $1 million. In order to reduce the cost for this work, a Bulletin G was created by the Architect to use precast concrete sections in lieu of poured in place concrete. Pricing received for Bulletin G was not as good as expected so other alternatives such as drilling, use of utility trench or direct burial were investigated. Ultimately, the Bulletin G scope of work was determined to be the best value to the government for first cost and long term maintenance. Pricing was available from both Sequence 1 and Sequence 2 for the work, and since Sequence 1 was nearly finished with their work and Sequence 2 was slightly lower in cost, the decision was made to award work to Sequence 2. During the period of tunnel evaluation, the cost of steel pipe and other metals, which were always in Sequence 2, went up significantly in cost. The Sequence 2 contractor could not order this material until a decision was made on the tunnel configuration, since that could affect the pipe required. The added cost for Sequence 2 materials escalation is $1 million.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER CONSTRUCTION

Question. In November 2004, GAO recommended AOC use incentives to keep CVC contractors on schedule, and rigorously track, document, and analyze the reasons for delays. What specific steps have you taken to implement these recommendations? The fiscal year 2006 budget request includes $36 million to complete the CVC. Are you confident this will be sufficient? Does this leave you with sufficient contingency? What steps are you taking to ensure the project stays within this new budget of $517 million? You say that delays in the job were due in part to a record year of bad weather—Why wasn't weather listed as one of the reasons for delay when the change order was settled?

Answer. The Sequence 2 contract has an award fee of $1.2 million available to the contractor that is used as a positive incentive for good contractor performance including timely completion. The first portion of that award for $150,000 is currently being evaluated. The Sequence 2 contractor's schedule is being evaluated monthly to resolve any delay issues and track their progress against the schedule. In addition, the construction manager has developed a more integrated Master Schedule for the project that includes all those activities in addition to construction that are required to complete the CVC facility for opening. To date, aside from the 10 month delay for Sequence 1 to complete their work and allow Sequence 2 to begin, there have been no delays in the Sequence 2 contract. We believe the $36.9 million requested in fiscal year 2006, together with the reprogramming request of $26.3 million in fiscal year 2005, provides sufficient funds and contingency to complete the project, providing those funds are forth coming to avoid delays in Sequence 2 for award of contracts such as Exhibit construction and House and Senate Expansion space. This also assumes our estimate of $15 million is adequate to cover the 10 month delay for Sequence 2 to commence work while awaiting the completion of Sequence 1 work, that there are no significant added costs for the House Connector tunnel and no significant owner changes to the current project including the Jefferson Building work, the Expansion spaces or the CVC.

Unusually severe weather is excusable time, but not compensable. Total delay was 235 working days. The sequence 1 contractor was compensated for a maximum of 217 days. (Some subcontractors experienced a greater weather impact than others, and their settlements were based on a lower number of compensable days).

Question. Has AOC formally evaluated the performance of its CVC construction management firm? If not, why not? If so, when and with what results? What incentives or penalties are provided in their contract for performance?

Answer. We have evaluated the construction managers' performance twice to date, in August 2004 and February 2005. The result indicated improvement was needed in schedule management, dispute resolution, and the preparation of change order packages. Since their last evaluation significant improvements have been made in dispute resolution and change order preparation, with schedule management currently being addressed. Their contract does not provide for either incentives or penalties, which has been normal for this type contract.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Question. AOC does not maintain consistent baseline data in its Project Information Center to track changes to project costs and schedules. What progress have you made developing information systems that quickly collect and roll up information on all ongoing capital projects to senior management and congressional committees? What still needs to be done?

Answer. One of the greatest challenges the AOC has faced is how to satisfy the many demands to report project status both internally and externally. Each entity wants to know basically the same things: is a project within budget, is it on time, and will it meet the customer's needs? The challenge in the past has been that the various entities have asked for project performance indicators in many different ways. In the attempt to satisfy the many different but similar questions, the AOC has not done as good a job as it could have.

In September 2004, when the pilot organization was initiated, project reporting through PIC was suspended pursuant to senior management's interest in reporting on contract status in lieu of project status. A manually-produced report was developed that clearly indicated contract status, and the data could easily be verified by comparison to financial and procurement documents. These so-called COTR reports have been kept internally for six months.

Over the past few months, the AOC has been working closely with the Government Accountability Office during the current cycle of its General Management Review. The GAO had asked that the AOC provide yet another series of project performance indicators. On a parallel path, the AOC project management team had been developing a report format that would answer recurring questions asked over the past several years, as well as satisfy a requirement to report project status on a quarterly basis. The report format uses project performance indicators based on verifiable contract and financial data, but also includes a text status. The format has been reviewed by some of the Superintendents, who have given it favorable comments related to its ability to accurately portray project status. Together, the AOC and the GAO are working to assure that this format, along with definitions, will satisfy project reporting requirements. The AOC's published a manually produced version of this report at the end of March 2005. Feedback will be gathered before any attempt is made to make changes in PIC to produce the report from an automated system.

Question. How will the new (pilot) project management organization improve your ability to manage projects? How will you determine if this new organization is a success?

Answer. The pilot organization has established clear performance expectations for delivering high quality design and construction projects on time and within budget. Now that the project and construction management functions reside, for the first time, within the same organization, these expectations can be managed by recognizing success and poor performance. Internally, the AOC has developed customer satisfaction surveys to measure performance as viewed by the jurisdictions. External customer satisfaction feedback will be sought in the future.

In its transitional state, only a few projects funded in fiscal year 2005 have begun the construction phase with the benefits of better planning and scope development. As the organization matures and delivers more design and construction projects, performance results are anticipated to improve.

Question. You recently released to employees a set of manuals containing project management best practices that are to be followed. How will you ensure that AOC employees actually follow those best practices?

Answer. Key components of the best practices manual processes are summarized in checklists that accompany project development through its scope development, design, construction, and closeout phases. These checklists serve as quick references to assure adherence to critical processes. Projects without completed checklists are not permitted to proceed without a senior level exemption being granted. However, due to the significant competition for funding resources, project managers and their clients, the Superintendents, are increasingly rigorous in developing project data to satisfy justification requirements. Project managers who utilize the manuals will be successful in completing their checklists.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RICHARD J. DURBIN

ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

Question. In February, "The Hill" newspaper published an article entitled "Fear and Loathing at AOC", which reported on the results of a recent AOC employee feedback survey. According to the article, the survey showed that senior management at AOC is dysfunctional, inconsistent, and lacks leadership qualities. It also reiterated some long-standing issues at AOC, such as poor communications and very low morale. Why do these issues still persist? What actions are you taking to respond to employee concerns?

Answer. The article stems from an initiative we took to solicit employee feedback to identify specific areas for improvement.

In September we asked over 300 employees, from all organizations, divisions, levels, and shifts, to partake in 25 focus groups. The purpose of holding the focus groups was specifically to get employee feedback on areas for improvement. The participation and the outcome were beyond our expectations: 215 employees shared their opinions on our way of doing business. We also obtained very good feedback on opportunities for improvement.

In addition to these focus groups, the Human Resources Management Division (HRMD) invited employees to share their opinions in a customer satisfaction survey in October. The questions focused on the services HRMD provides and how well they deliver those services. The findings from the HRMD survey were compiled and validated against the issues raised during the focus groups. This process took some time in that both electronic and paper copies of the survey had to be processed and analyzed. By coupling this information, the senior management team had a broader cross-section of employees' views, opinions, and suggestions to evaluate.

Through our employees active participation in this feedback-gathering process we identified the following areas where we need to do a better job:

—Communicating (provide clearer, easier-to-understand information, obtain more employee input, explain work processes, policies, procedures, publish an organizational chart);
—Providing clearer direction (explain internal procedures and policies including job expectations, manage shifting priorities, coordinate assignments, set service standards);
—Recognizing employee accomplishments (more acknowledgment of individual accomplishments by senior managers, use of awards);
—Explaining our Mission and Vision;
—Outlining customer service expectations (define the standards for excellence, hold internal organizations accountable for quality service, clearly communicate standards); and
—Setting Agency standards that provide responsive customer support to meet AOC employee needs from HR, Procurement, EEO and other service organizations.

Based on the information and feedback received, we have created eight cross-jurisdictional work teams that are taking each of the areas identified for improvement and they are developing action plans to address them as expeditiously as possible.

CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER

Question. What do you expect the final cost of the CVC to be? What do you see as the major reasons for cost increases in this project and what are you doing to control costs during the remainder of the project?

Answer. We expect the final cost for the construction of the CVC facility to be $517.6 million. The major reason for the cost increase to date is the addition of $141.8 million in budgeted added scope, and $29.1 million in delay costs due to the added scope and differing site conditions. Sequence 1 delay costs totaled $10.3 million, and $18.5 million is expected to be required to fund Sequence 2 costs as a consequence of the 10 month delay while Sequence 2 waited for Sequence 1 to complete their work. Controlling costs for the remainder of the project requires that there be no significant changes to the contract and Expansion space, no significant differing site conditions in the House Connector tunnel or Jefferson Building work, and timely release of the project funding so contracts can be awarded and change orders processed.

Question. Without additional appropriations, when will the CVC project run out of money?

Answer. The CVC project has 24 line items. We are already out of funding for the item to fund change orders for the Sequence 2 contract and will be out of authority for funding CVC Administration in mid May 2005. Until we receive additional funding we cannot award the House and Senate Expansion space. We have funding available in other line items, but those funds are required for construction of the Exhibit area, $6.6 million; security equipment, $4 million; perimeter security, $2 million; House Connector tunnel, $2.5 million; and Jefferson Building work, $3.3 million.

Question. GAO's risk-based cost and schedule estimates have been much more accurate that the AOC's or their construction management firm. What is AOC doing to integrate risk assessment in its future estimates?

Answer. The risks remaining on the CVC project relate primarily to our complicated building systems, and those elements of work not yet under contract which includes the House Connector tunnel, the House and Senate Expansion space, and the Jefferson Building work. The systems include the filtration system since it involves a new technology, and a very complicated fire safety and smoke evacuation system. To minimize the above risk the entire team, including subcontractors, is working to ensure we understand all of the issues required to complete and turn over these systems.

Question. According to GAO, over $1 million in additional costs was incurred due to AOC's indecision on how to construct the Utility tunnel. Why did this happen?

Answer. The utility tunnel work in the Sequence 1 contract did not include new requirements by WASA for the tie-in of utilities at Second Street that was estimated to cost approximately $1 million. In order to reduce the cost for this work, a Bulletin G was created by the Architect to use precast concrete sections in lieu of poured in place concrete. Pricing received for Bulletin G was not as good as expected so other alternatives such as drilling, use of utility trench or direct burial were investigated. Ultimately, the Bulletin G scope of work was determined to be the best value to the government for first cost and long term maintenance. Pricing was available from both Sequence 1 and Sequence 2 for the work, and since Sequence 1 was nearly finished with their work and Sequence 2 was slightly lower in cost, the decision was made to award work to Sequence 2. During the period of tunnel evaluation, the cost of steel pipe and other metals, which were always in Sequence 2, went up significantly in cost. The Sequence 2 contractor could not order this material until a decision was made on the tunnel configuration, since that could affect the pipe required. The added cost for Sequence 2 materials escalation is $1 million.

Question. When can we expect the CVC to be open to the public and will the Senate expansion space be ready for use at the same time? What are the liquidated damages for the CVC and are they the same for completion of the Senate expansion space?

Answer. We expect the CVC portion of the project to be available for public use in September 2006. The Senate space will probably not be ready, especially since we still do not yet have the funding approved to make the award of the contract. The liquidated damages on the CVC are $16,000 a day and the liquidated damages for the House and Senate Expansion Space work is $4,750 per day.

Question. Considering that the CVC will most likely not open until fiscal year 2007, why have you asked for so much in your fiscal year 2006 operations budget for the CVC? Additionally, why have you requested so many FTE's?

Answer. The operations and maintenance costs included in my fiscal year 2006 budget request were based on a June timeframe as opposed to September opening date. It is estimated that the costs for operations and maintenance will be $10.4 million rather than $15.3 million as originally requested. I have included these requirements in the AOC budget submission until a determination is made on who will have oversight of the facility. An additional $20 million was included for start-up and opening costs for gift shops, Visitor Center services, Capitol police furniture, fixtures and equipment, House recording studio, data network wiring and equipping of the House shell space. Since the House shell space estimate was also included in the fiscal year 2006 Budget request of the Chief Administrative Officer of the House, this request can be reduced to $9.1 million for this portion of the budget. As a result of the September opening date, the payroll estimate can be revised from $12 million to $7 million with an associated reduction in FTEs.

Question. In November 2004, when GAO presented its most recent estimate of the cost to complete the project, it recommended that you immediately enhance the CVC project team's schedule management capacity, use incentives and other means to keep contractors on schedule, and rigorously track, document, and analyze the reasons for delays. What specific steps have you taken to implement these recommendations?

Answer. The Construction Manager contracted with a scheduling consultant to help their field staff in schedule management. In addition, we have contracted with the firm that prepared the "Cost to Complete" in 2004 to review those efforts and offer recommendations. To date those efforts still require improvement and a senior official has assumed those responsibilities.

We currently have a $1.2 million award fee that is used as an incentive for outstanding performance by the Sequence 2 construction contractor.

Question. Who was responsible for ensuring that adequate contract and project summary schedules were developed, kept current, and adhered to and for documenting delays and their causes as they occurred? How well in your view, was this done over the course of the project?

Answer. The construction manager has responsibility for ensuring that adequate contract and project summary schedules were developed, kept current, and adhered to as well as documenting delays and their causes as they occurred. That work has been marginal to date, and they are changing the personnel responsible for that effort to a senior official on site.

Question. How much has AOC paid Gilbane to manage the CVC construction work and how well has Gilbane performed? Has AOC formally evaluated Gilbane's performance? If so, when and what were the results? If not, why not? What incentives or penalties are provided for in Gilbane's contract for performance?

Answer. Gilbane's contract for construction management for the CVC portion totals $15.5 million. Payments to date total $12,772,847. We have evaluated the construction managers' performance twice to date, in August 2004 and February 2005. The results indicated improvement was needed in schedule management, dispute resolution, and the preparation of change order packages. Since their last evaluation significant improvements have been made in dispute resolution and change order preparation, with schedule management currently being addressed. Their contract does not provide for either incentives or penalties, which has been normal for this type contract.

Question. In view of the cost and completion increases for this project, what incentives are there for your various consultants to control these items?

Answer. The design and construction manager consultants' primarily incentive is the reputation they receive on projects such as this one. They are very concerned that this project be viewed in the end as a success, and that they personally are viewed as having successfully overcome huge scope additions and differing site conditions to complete the project in a timely and cost effective manner, in spite of the challenges imposed upon them.

Question. What is the overall status of AOC's efforts to correct the internal control weaknesses reported from the fiscal year 2003 audit?

Answer. The AOC has approved a policy to establish an Internal Control program modeled after the program at the Library of Congress. It has been modified to comply with the intent of the Sarbanes Oxley Act of 2002 and OMB Circular A–123. Development of the policy is partially complete with a target implementation date of September 30, 2005. The program's development is currently being handled by contractors. The program will require additional resources for its implementation.

Question. When does the AOC expect the fiscal year 2004 audit to be completed?

Answer. All field work has been completed. The final requirement to complete the audit is for AOC management to sign representation letters which we are in the process of accomplishing.

Question. Could the AOC provide a copy of the fiscal year 2004 audit report to this committee as soon as they receive it from their auditors?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Is the AOC expecting any new, significant internal control findings from the 2004 audit?

Answer. The auditors have not yet provided us with a ranking of the audit findings as to significance. The answer though is clear, there are significant findings. The audit found 15 new findings not all of which were material. There were also 6 repeat findings from the previous year. Most of the significant internal controls findings were weaknesses in the Payroll, Personnel and Procurement areas.

Question. The proposed AOC organization chart dated December 2004 shows the Project Executive for the CVC directly reporting to the Architect of the Capitol. Has this reorganization taken place?

Answer. Reorganization proposal has been submitted for Committee review and we propose to implement in May. CVC Project Executive reports to the Architect of the Capitol.

Question. The proposed AOC organization chart dated December 2004 shows a Chief of Staff reporting directly to the Architect of the Capitol. What are the duties of the person in this position? Will there be any overlap in the duties of the Chief of Staff and the Chief Operating Officer?

Answer. The Chief of Staff assists both the Architect and COO in a variety of agency outreach communication and Congressional support needs. With the COO's extensive internal operational functions, on a strategic as well as day to day basis, the support of the Chief of Staff allows the COO to concentrate more fully on these responsibilities. Following are the duties of the COO and Chief of Staff.

Duties of the Chief Operating Officer/Deputy:

—Responsible for reviewing and directing the operational functions of the Office of the Architect of the Capitol including: facilities operation and maintenance; safety; design, construction and project management; administration and modernization of information technology systems employed by the Office; productivity and cost-savings measures; strategic human capital management, including performance management and training and development initiatives; financial management, including the integration of operational functions and financial management to ensure that budgets, financial information, and systems support the required strategic and annual plans.

—Serves as senior advisor to and representative of the Architect. The individual will provide advice and assistance on all aspects of the management and operations of the AOC; provides advice on all operational aspects of AOC business functions including facilities operation and maintenance; safety; design, construction and project management; procurement and contracting; budget and financial management; information technology; human resources, and other administrative management matters.

—Assists the Architect in promoting reform and measuring results, and is responsible to the Architect of the Capitol for the direction, operation, and management of the Office of the Architect of the Capitol. Additionally, the individual is responsible for implementing the Office's mission and goals; and providing organization management to improve the Office's performance.

—Responsible for developing, implementing, annually updating, and maintaining a long-term strategic plan covering a period of not less that 5 years.

—Responsible for developing and implementing an annual performance plan that includes annual performance goals covering each of the general goals and objectives in the strategic plan and including to the extent practicable quantifiable performance measures for the annual goals.

—Responsible for proposing organizational changes and new positions needed to carry out the Office of the Architect of the Capitol's mission and strategic and annual performance goal and will ensure that the AOC's organizational structure promotes efficiency and effectiveness.

Duties of the Chief of Staff:

—Assist the Architect and the COO in exploring and developing program and management ideas, evaluating problems and developing suggested course of action in program and policy development and evaluation; conducts research and provides data to assist the Architect and COO in their review and evaluation or program and policy proposals from staff, incorporates the perspective of Members and or Congressional staff in the evaluation of AOC programs, operations and policy.

—Assists the Architect and the COO in day-to-day information management, priority initiatives, meetings and meeting information, and may represent the Architect or the COO in meetings with staff and stakeholders.

—Manages legislative affairs; develops and nurtures relations with Members and staff; tracks legislative mandates; facilitates Congressional meetings for the Architect and COO; assists in leading AOC outreach to Congressional staff to help ensure that the Agency is addressing Congressional support needs.

—Manages and coordinates Agency communications; assesses agency internal and external communications processes and develops appropriate improvement initiatives; develop proposals for communications alternatives to address Agency communications gaps or focused initiatives to meet identified needs.

PROCUREMENT IRREGULARITIES

Question. Mr. Hantman, we understand in part from The Hill article titled "Fear and Loathing at the AOC" that your Focus Group findings noted the following customer service concerns with your entire Procurement Department:

—Your process, roles, and responsibilities are either ill defined or not defined at all;

—There is a general lack of understanding of the businesses they are procuring for; and

—Procurement procedures are not applied consistently.

We also understand that your fiscal year 2003 financial audit uncovered procurement irregularities at the CVC and in fiscal year 2004 the auditors have found these same irregularities throughout the AOC.

What steps have you taken to correct this serious situation of work being performed before a contract is awarded?

Answer. In January 2004, the Procurement Division began requiring more information when an unauthorized procurement was discovered. This information includes a description and quantity of the unauthorized procurement, why it was needed, the benefit acquired, why a requisition was not prepared and a Contracting Officer allowed to place the order/contract, the circumstances that led to the unauthorized procurement, the name of the vendor used, the vendor's invoice, how the vendor was selected, the basis for determining if the price was fair and reasonable, other vendors and prices considered, the date the service or supply was received and requested by the Government, documentation from the Budget Office that funds are available if the unauthorized procurement utilized prior year funds, actions taken to prevent future unauthorized procurements, and an explanation why the unauthorized procurement should be ratified rather than holding the individual who made it personally responsible. At the same time, a Standard Operating Procedure was established in the Procurement Division to provide policy and guidance to Procurement Division staff when they discover an unauthorized procurement. On June 21, 2004, the Deputy Chief of Staff, issued a memorandum to all Superintendents and Division Directors stating that the practice of unauthorized commitments was unacceptable. On March 14, 2005, the Deputy Chief of Staff issued a second memorandum requiring that the Superintendents and Division Directors who had issued unauthorized procurements since June 2004 meet with the Deputy Chief of Staff and the Director, Procurement Division regarding this issue. On March 22, 2005, Architect of the Capitol Order 34–01–01 Ratifications of Unauthorized Procurements was signed by the Deputy Chief of Staff to establish AOC-wide policy and underscore the importance of complying with procurement regulations and the ratification process.

Question. What processes does your Procurement Department have to detect and prevent these situations from recurring in the future?

Answer. As previously stated, several processes were put in place to address and prevent unauthorized procurements. The implementation of these processes began January 2004 and culminated on March 22, 2005 with the Architect of the Capitol Order 34–01–01 Ratifications of Unauthorized Procurements.

The Procurement Division typically detects unauthorized procurements in three manners. First, an AOC employee may contact the Procurement Division directly to discuss a possible unauthorized procurement. Second, a contractor may contact the Procurement Division to inquire about recent and/or on-going work, at which time it becomes apparent that an unauthorized procurement has occurred. Third, the Procurement Division recently teamed with the Accounting Division to establish a notification process when an invoice is received that predates the contract or order. In all three instances, the Procurement Division responds by investigating to determine if the occurrence is actually an unauthorized procurement. If it is, then the appropriate Jurisdiction/Organization's official is required to submit the information required by the ratification process.

Question. In the last year, how many times did your Procurement Department discover this situation where a contractor performed work prior to a valid contract being awarded?

Answer. During the time frame of April 1, 2004-April 30, 2005, the Procurement Division discovered 28 situations where a contractor performed work prior to a valid contract being awarded.

Question. How many times was the responsible AOC employee required to submit a statement for contract ratification?

Answer. In all 28 situations that were discovered, the responsible AOC employee was requested to provide a sufficient explanation to determine if a ratification would be issued.

Question. Who is the ratifying official if not you and what steps do they take to ensure these serious irregularities are prevented in the future?

Answer. The March 22, 2005, Architect of the Capitol Order 34–01–04 Ratifications of Unauthorized Procurements specifies that the ratifying official is the Architect of the Capitol, the Chief Operating Officer, the Deputy Chief of Staff, or their designee.

PERSONNEL CONTROLS

Question. Mr. Hantman, your employees in the Focus Group findings, and your auditor, in the two audits (fiscal year 2003 and fiscal year 2004) have identified numerous findings in the Personnel Office. The findings of the Focus Group and the auditor are similar in many ways, for example:

—Focus Group—Employee questions receive either incorrect information or no information at all, answers depend on who you ask since not all staff is knowledgeable.

—Audits—Information is not properly maintained for an employee, official personnel files are not up-to-date, information is routinely entered incorrectly into the payroll/personnel system, and no checking and verification is performed.

What are you doing to address the numerous serious Focus Group and Audit findings?

Answer. As a result of preliminary findings from the financial audit, Human Resources requested an expert assessment of our Payroll and Personnel processing by the National Finance Center (NFC). The assessment was completed in March 2005, and we expect a final report at the beginning of May. Although checking and verification is performed, we have determined that it needs to be accomplished earlier in the process to prevent errors, rather than discovering errors and correcting them. Based on preliminary findings from both the Audit and NFC assessment, a number of internal controls have been instituted. In addition, Human Resources is considering a consolidation of personnel processing functions to provide greater internal controls, but we will review NFC's assessment report and recommendations before a final decision is made.

As part of AOC's Human Capital Plan, Workforce Management and Human Resources are working jointly to review AOC's Human Resources competency model, management will assess employee's using the model, and developmental needs will be addressed.

Question. When your Personnel Office's processes and systems lack fundamental internal controls, you open your agency to waste or worse, to fraud. Have any overpayments been made to AOC employees or has any fraud in the payroll area been brought to your attention? If so, what corrective action have you taken?

Answer. Incorrect payments have been made to employees through both corrections to time and attendance records, and corrections to personnel records. In cases of underpayment, the corrected action properly pays the employee. In the case of overpayments, we follow a systematic process to collect monies due from employees. Only one case of potential fraud was identified, and we are currently investigating the specific case, which involves two employees. The investigation is complete for one employee, and appropriate disciplinary action is being initiated. We are still reviewing additional records for the second employee, and appropriate disciplinary action will be initiated if warranted.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REFORMS

Question. In the Senate Report on Legislative Branch Appropriations, 2002, I specifically sought the urgent need for a Chief Financial Officer at the AOC to begin essential financial management reforms. From every GAO General Management Review progress report, I have been pleased to learn that substantial progress has been made.

Mr. Hantman, can I expect your commitment to continue in this most important area?

Answer. Yes. We are examining the resource needs of the CFO's organization to ensure the people, tools and skills necessary to continue this process are in place. I am communicating to every employee especially our management employees that sound financial management is everyone's responsibility not just the CFO's.

Agency Heads in the Executive Branch are now required (similar to the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002) to lead by example and assert that their fiscal year 2006 financial controls will result in timely, accurate, and useful financial and management information.

Question. Mr. Hantman, if you had the same requirement, when would you be able to make this same assertion?

Answer. Our Internal Control Program is scheduled to be in place by September 30, 2005. The reality is that I would like the program to have been in place for one year, fiscal year 2006, before we implemented full assertion as I understand is required now by OMB Circular A–123 for executive branch agencies. I recognize that this may impact our Audit results, but request time to allow our internal control program to mature.

SUBCOMMITTEE RECESS

Senator ALLARD. I want to thank you for your testimony. And, with that, we'll recess the subcommittee. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 11:55 a.m., Wednesday, April 13, the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]