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NATIONAL STATE DATA CENTER STEERING COMMITTEE

*Representing a Network of 1,800
SDC/BIDC Data Centers and Affiliates Nationwide*

We Bring Value-Added Census Data and Education to the User

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State Data Center Steering Committee Meeting Minutes February 6-8, 2008 Suitland, MD

All State Data Center Steering Committee Members were in attendance for the entire meeting. Meetings were held from 9 am to 5 pm on February 6th and 7th at Census Bureau Headquarters in Suitland, MD and from 9 am to Noon on February 8th at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Alexandria, VA.

Wednesday, February 6, 2008 Census Bureau Headquarters

Welcome and Introductions

Lisa Blumerman, Chief, Customer Liaison and Marketing Services Office

Staff Announcement Changes

Barbara Harris has been promoted to Deputy Chief of CLMSO and Renee Jefferson-Copeland has moved to Chief of the Census in Schools Branch. Within the next 6-weeks CLMSO should announce replacements for the positions left vacant by these staff changes.

Enrique Lamas, Chief, Population Division

The division looks to the group for assistance with the distribution of data and review of the population estimates. They also look forward to working with group on the distribution of the upcoming 3-year ACS estimates.

Howard Shih - Chair, Census Information Data Center

Linda Gage, Chair, Federal-State Cooperative Program for Population Estimates

Xan Wedel, Chair, State Data Center

Demographic Programs Update

Howard Hogan, Associate Director for Demographic Programs

Howard's presentation included a discussion of new products, programs and budget issues.

The Census Bureau produced first comprehensive atlas in more than 80 years, the *Census Atlas of the United States* available for sale and online at:

http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/census_2000/011433.html

The Steering Committees requested copies of the Atlas be sent to the network, and this request will be considered. [Footnote: A copy is being sent out to all leads during the week of February 18th.]

The President's proposed budget for 2009 is out and it is good news for the Bureau. The proposed budget contains additional funding needed to improve the CPS (Current Population Survey) survey. This funding will be used for software and hardware, especially security issues; to ensure confidentiality; and to ensure a good response rate. In the past, SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program) has helped fund the supplemental sample size for the CPS.

SIPP (Survey of Income and Program Participation) was funded in 2007 at a level for a reduced sample / number of questions. Under a continuing resolution, this meant the program would not have enough

funding for the survey in 2008 (after January 2008), but congress did fund the SIPP. However, because the work had to stop and start, data collection will not take place from February through August 2008. In 2009, SIPP will be fully funded. The Bureau is working to improve the SIPP at the same time that they are gearing back up; converting from a DOS system to Windows and also testing the number of times that they need to be in field collecting data.

New reports being released are focused on: Who Can Afford to Buy a House in 2002, Maternity Leave, Living Arrangements of Children, etc. The Bureau has created a synthetic public use data set that integrates IRS (Internal Revenue Service), SSA (Social Security Administration), and SIPP data. The Bureau is planning to compare the synthetic data to real data to see if the same research results are obtained.

The Bureau continues to produce and has released the 2007 population estimates for all the states. In May the Bureau will release the national characteristics data file. The Bureau uses state administrative records for population estimates and also allows state challenges to help ensure quality estimates. The MAF (Master Address File) is being developed and refined, housing unit estimates are being evaluated (HUBERT - Housing Unit-Based Estimates Research Team), and the ACS (American Community Survey) is underway. The challenge for the Bureau is how to put all these resources together to improve the population estimates. There are various re-evaluation research projects going on throughout the country with the Census Bureau -- Montana, California, New York -- and these will all help improve the population estimates.

There will be a CPS supplement on foreign born in August 2008 with questions like year of entry to this country, etc. The Population Division held a conference to discuss how to measure re-admittances and how to help define them.

Poverty estimates (SAIPE - Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates) are available for the number of school-age (ages 5-17) children in poverty by school district throughout the country. This program integrates survey results and administrative records data using statistical models. Poverty estimates were from the CPS and IRS master file (the number of exemptions for children in families). The Bureau has switched from using the CPS to using the ACS since the sample is larger.

Answers to questions from committee members:

- The Bureau will get back to the Steering Committees detailing when more timely data will be available from the SIPP.
- The population estimates challenge process allows areas to challenge total population, but not a specific age group of the population; and housing unit changes are considered.

Census Bureau Updates/Introduction of Director

Preston Jay Waite, Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer

Jay reminded the group where we are in the Decennial Census process and that the time for testing is quickly passing. Jay then introduced Steve Murdock as the new director (biography available at http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/murdock_bio.html)

Steve H. Murdock, Director

The Director has been associated with the SDC and FSCPE networks since the early 1980s. He values state perspectives and views, and feels that the contributions of the groups are important. He is well aware that the Census needs dedicated staff and help from the states. The Bureau wants to listen and hear the issues from the states and wants buy-in from the states.

The Director opened up his session to questions from the Steering Committee members. All three committees welcomed Director Murdock and expressed how pleased and eager they are to work with him.

The Bureau is evaluating and re-evaluating the handhelds at this time. They have created a task force headed by Bill Barron.

A question concerning Partnership programs began a discussion of the relationship between the Bureau and the states. As the Bureau prepares for the decennial and ACS, the Partnership program should get involved with the SDCs and FSCPEs because these groups can help shortcut some of the processes. The Bureau can

not do it without the states and cooperation will be beneficial for everyone. A concern from the SDCs is that the Partnership program communications message for 2010 will be too late for the states and that partnership should have started already, especially Census in the Schools. Unfortunately the constrained budget led to delays in some of this and everyone agrees that getting the message out earlier would have been beneficial.

It was reiterated that the Bureau is very pleased with the President's proposed budget as it would ensure sufficient funding for infrastructure, etc. The proposed budget is higher than had been projected, but the higher funding is needed.

A question about ACS and rural areas prompted a discussion which focused on ACS and the importance of ensuring data for rural areas. The Bureau recognizes the challenges that ACS will present, not only the process, but also interpreting the data. Education and presentation of the ACS will be key. Promotion and marketing of the ACS as the long-form replacement, and continuing the educating of users on how to interpret the numbers will need to be done throughout the country.

In 2010, the Bureau will be operating on a very tight timeline, between collection, review and mail-out of results. The schedule will need to be determined early and when the window opens for count review, it needs to be done quickly to ensure that the results can be incorporated.

2010 Decennial Program Update

Teresa Angueira, Associate Director for Decennial Census Introduced Dan Weinberg - Assistant Director for Decennial Census

Teresa reviewed the handout that is available at: <http://www.census.gov/sdc/www/0208teresa.ppt>

MAF/TIGER Enhancement Program Update - Most counties will be finished by April of this year with the island counties later in the year. The MTPS (MAF/TIGER Partnership Software) is currently being used for LUCA, BAS and will also be used for redistricting.

ACS - The Bureau has received feedback on data release plan (3-year) for this fall. 2008 questionnaire has been in the field (with the new questions/wording). The 2008 ACS methods panel was not funded; however the Bureau completed an analysis of the 2007 methods test.

2010 Census Update

2007 Bilingual forms test - The Bureau redesigned the form and preliminary results confirmed a higher response rate, but there were still some item non-response issues.

Dress Rehearsal (DR) - The Bureau completed a few operations but had to down scope many others due to the continuing resolution at the beginning of the FY. For this reason they are in the middle of designing a re-plan with the FDCA contractor to align schedule, budget, and scope of the contract. They are exploring how and when to test systems not tested in the DR.

LUCA - 11,430 local governments signed up to participate. Some local governments have dropped out and some areas have requested a different option after receiving materials. Overall, 80% selected option 1; 13% selected option 2; and 7% selected option 3. The Bureau has received changes from 4% of participants. Due to a delay in delivering materials the Bureau will still honor the 120-day review period for those governments that signed up by November 19th. The deadline for participants who signed up after November 19th is still April 4th. The Bureau needs to stay on schedule in order to validate materials under this program. SDCs were encouraged to prompt governments to return the materials by the deadline and earlier, if possible.

Regional Census Centers are open and the infrastructure is there. In many regions, staff may not have moved yet to the new centers. For the 150 early LCOs (Local Census Offices), the Bureau has signed leases for 8 and is currently working to negotiate leases for the others.

The communications program goals are to increase the response rate, encourage participation, and increase accuracy. An integrated communications plan has been drafted and will be delivered this month. The goal is for a final integrated plan by April, which should be available in time for the April 2010 Census kickoff meeting in New Orleans. To develop the plan, DraftFCB held focus groups and met with variety of race and ethnic groups.

April 30, 2008 is deadline for FSCPE GQ (Group Quarter) Update Program data submission.

She showed a short video - 2010 Census, A Portrait of America.

2010 Census Communications Campaign

Tasha Boone, Census 2010 Promotion Office

See handout at <http://www.census.gov/sdc/www/tashaone.ppt>

DraftFCB delivered a draft plan on February 5th. DraftFcb will submit a revised plan to the Census Bureau on March 18th. The final Communications plan will be submitted on May 30, 2008. The Bureau will discuss the plan at the spring meeting (Census 2010 Kick-off) the following week in New Orleans.

The DraftFCB team is made up of the following core partner subcontractors:

- Public relations: Weber Shandwick
- Media buyer: Initiative
- African-American: Global Hue
- Hispanic: Global Hue Latino
- Asian-American: IW Group
- American Indian/Alaska Native & Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander: g&g
- Emerging markets: Allied Media
- Recruitment: Marcom Group
- Design: Zona Design
- Translation: A to Si
- Puerto Rico: DraftFCB Puerto Rico

2010 Census Partnership Program -- Field Division Partnership Specialist Hiring Plan Update

Tim Olson, Assistant Division Chief, Field Division, Partnership & Data Services/American Community Survey

See handout at <http://www.census.gov/sdc/www/0208tim.ppt>

The Complete Count Committee brochure is available online at:

http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/2007/CCCBrochureD_1256.pdf

Tim discussed 2010 partnership staffing levels in the regions and looked at where we are now and where they will be in 2009 and 2010.

The draft DraftFCB communications plan will be reviewed this week. Field Partnership will be using tools developed and designed by DraftFCB. There was no hiring in 2007 due to budget constraints, but Regional Directors and other staff began early regional partnership efforts. A report will be released in the next 2 months that outlines what was discussed in 2007 meetings with tribal governments.

The Bureau began hiring in January 2008 and there will be a total of 10 people (120 total) in each region by May (6 in January and 4 in May). Training of these new staff is underway.

There is a list of major partnership activities in the handout. This list is preliminary and prior to the list from DraftFCB.

Questions added the following information:

There will be a plan to enumerate Alaska similar to what occurred for the 2000 Census.

It was noted that the staffing for 2010 for partnership was similar to what occurred in 2000, with no increased staffing due to the diversity and challenges of the population. This level of staffing was based on the anticipated future budget.

The Bureau plans to use the planning database to identify areas that are hard to count to determine where to put the QACs (Questionnaire Assistance Centers). Centers will be staffed by Census employees; generally working about 3 hours per day, 15 hours a week. The schedules will vary based on the site of the QAC. The Bureau anticipates that there will be about 30,000 QACs.

It was suggested that the Bureau consider including the SDCs as part of the partnership training. Also, the earlier the Bureau can give the SDCs information about partnership activities and planning, the better. This is important because many states are currently building their budgets for the coming year and some for the next 2 years. It was also mentioned that it is important that the Regional Offices websites be kept up-to-date with information on the upcoming Decennial census.

Geography/LUCA Update

Linda Franz, Assistant Division Chief, Geography Division

The MAF/TIGER Accuracy Improvement Program is on schedule and the Bureau anticipates that the current process will be completed this spring. So far the Bureau has received 3,159 of 3,232 counties from Harris Corporation, the vendor for this project. The project will result in accurate road positions and the Bureau will collect the GPS of the housing units on the handheld units.

The BAS (Boundary Annexation Survey) Program that collects boundary and annexation changes is almost underway. The 2008 survey will include all legal entities as the Bureau starts to ramp up for the 2010 Census. Responses to BAS can be done via a variety of ways. An area can submit BAS with LUCA; use MTPS, submit on paper, submit using a GIS system and update a shapefile. For the forms component there is a web-based means for the locals to provide information. Starting with 2009 BAS local governments can use a web-based system for both forms and boundaries.

The typical BAS cycle starts in September of the year to find out if an area has any changes. BAS forms are then usually mailed the following January. By April 1 the Bureau will need to receive responses in order to include in the next year's population estimates and ACS. May 31st is the next deadline to be included in the next year's BAS. This year, the mail-out will be in February, not January. BAS follow-up assistance is not requested from the SDCs unless you want to assist, given the work the SDCs have taken on in connection with the LUCA program.

Nationally, over 11,000 tribal, state, and local governments signed up to participate in the LUCA program. The Bureau appreciates any help that the networks can do to follow-up with these participants to ensure their participation. LUCA material mail-outs were delayed because of the challenges in retrieving data from the database system.

Already more than 600 participating governments have sent in their LUCA data. After reviewing some of the digital address updates, the Bureau would appreciate it if the networks could remind local governments that: address numbers should be text not numeric (no decimals); data should be submitted in the specified format; if your local, highly accurate GIS differs from the shapefiles from the Census Bureau, please do not delete and re-add all the streets, because the Bureau then loses all the information (features, blocks, etc.) that are tied to those roads.

The Census Bureau will put something out about massive map changes. Many areas are working with un-realigned data and the accuracy of the map should not get in the way with the update of the addresses. They are looking for added features that are totally missing and deleted features.

By January/February 2009 the Bureau will have all the new shapefiles from the MAF/TIGER Improvement Project available. The release of TIGER/Line that is imminent will only have the updates through mid-2007.

In summary, 29% of local governments signed up for LUCA for 2010 and over 20 states signed up. The percentage does not reflect coverage, since counties or regional planning organizations may submit for many local jurisdictions.

Reminder letters will be mailed to each participant from Jeffersonville with the April 4th deadline or the individual local government's deadline. The Bureau will be doing a mailing soon and again in March.

The Bureau has written the final response to the 4 geographic areas' Federal Register Notices. The CCDs' (Census County Divisions) notice is scheduled for publication February 8th with the CDPs' (Census Designated Places) notice shortly thereafter, followed by block groups and tracts. Two new Federal Register Notices will be coming soon.

Getting the Most out of the ACS: They Were the Best of Times, They Were the Worst of Times

Jane Traynham, Maryland State Data Center

Jane presented both sides of ACS - positive and negative (best of times / worst of times). A copy of the presentation can be found at: <http://www.census.gov/sdc/www/jane.ppt>

Best of Times -

- Fresh data every year
- Not having to tell clients that you only have data that are 7 years old
- Additional products from FactFinder - ranking tables and subject tables
- Data users will have more options for what best suits their needs - single year or multiyear
- Rural area profiles proposed for participating states

Worst of Times -

- Fresh data every year means having to update your products every year
- Having to calculate statistical significance every time you want to make a comparison of two geographic areas, two time periods, add data items together, calculate a ratio
- Sample size for ACS is much smaller than the decennial (which was 1 in 6 HH) - creating a larger sampling error
- How will the ACS sample size which is based on a set number (3 million addresses per year) reflect growing populations
- Multiyear estimates in addition to single year estimates
- Concerns that including seasonal population, which most likely will be higher income, will affect towns with lower income, full time population in applying for grants
- Explaining to media and other users that they should not just look at the estimate without considering the MOE
- Have you seen the formula for determining the statistical significance between two estimates?

Jane discussed ways to compare estimates - eyeball based on a graph with confidence intervals and formulas. Maryland created a worksheet for their affiliates to compare area data that is available at: <http://www.sdcbidc.iupui.edu/sharing/tools/CalculationForSignificantDifference.xls>.

Jane also discussed concerns that included funding issues for analysis; sample size; and studying how the data will be used. Perhaps instead of having 3-year and 5-year estimates an option could be to have less data coming out and use the funds to improve the data quality by increasing the sample size.

American Community Survey Update

Susan Schechter, Chief, American Community Survey Office

See handout at <http://www.census.gov/sdc/www/febacs.ppt>

For the ACS, field costs comprise about 70% - 75% of budget. The Bureau has reached a point where the funding for the ACS is relatively stable. For FY2008, the Bureau received additional funding for training field representatives and collecting a full year of group quarters data. The FY08 appropriation did not provide for the ACS Methods Panel activity thus the Bureau had to cancel some tests including: multi-lingual brochure, additional mailing during CATI, and planning.

The submission to Congress of questions planned for both the 2010 Census and ACS is required by law and due by March 31, 2008. ACS will also post the submission to the Bureau's website. This will be similar to the subjects notebook that is currently on the website.

The July 2007 content test included two versions of a question that would follow the educational attainment question to collect information on field of study. Preliminary results indicate that the open-ended version has performed better than the categorical version.

The Bureau has reviewed responses to the Federal Register notice published last August that described proposed ACS data products and release schedule and appreciated all the feedback. They are working on handbooks targeted for specific users or audiences that will address the use of multiyear estimates. Beginning at the end of August 2008, the Bureau will release the 2007 ACS 1-year estimates of income and poverty. Currently the plan is to release the (2005-2007) multiyear estimates by the end of the calendar year.

The Bureau is working on determining which time period the AFF (American FactFinder) data should default to 1-year, 3-year, etc. and how to clearly label what data are being displayed.

Debbie Griffin, Assistant to the Chief, American Community Survey Office
Debbie discussed two research topics - Seasonality (Q25) and Findings from the Multiyear Estimates Study

Seasonality

The ACS used to have a question to collect information on seasonality. The original question was not working well (1999-2002), and was changed in 2003 and then later dropped in 2008. This question, Q25, was used for testing purposes. The Bureau summarized the responses to the question and Debbie presented the results for 2005. For the analysis, Debbie defined seasonal housing units as all occupied housing units that said No to Q25a and a value of 1-5 months in Q25b.

She also discussed analyzing seasonal housing units based on the 3-year and 5-year averages. In addition, more research will be needed to look at the differences in characteristics of the seasonal population. The Census Bureau will continue to analyze these data.

Findings from the Multiyear Estimates Study

Preliminary reports are on the Bureau's website at http://www.census.gov/acs/www/AdvMeth/Multi_Year_Estimates/overview.html and final reports should be available soon. Looking at the data raised some issues about thresholds and data release rules, reliability and stability, and production products. The Bureau is continuing to research quality issues of multiyear estimates and will prepare a guidance paper on the usability of the 1-, 3-, and 5-year estimates.

Questions added the following information:

User materials are available for 10 audiences including: Media, General Public, Congressional, University Researchers, Schools, Government, Rural, and Federal. These handbooks will be PDFs (Portable Document Formats) and the Bureau is currently working on first drafts. Peer review is scheduled for April and May and final versions are expected to be up on the website in July 2008. The Bureau plans to have online tutorials based on these handbooks by the end of the year.

Thursday, February 7, 2008
Census Bureau Headquarters

2010 Census CIC/FSCPE/SDC Kickoff Plans/Discussion

Barbara Harris, Deputy Chief, Customer Liaison and Marketing Services Office
Tori Velkoff, Assistant Division Chief, Population Estimates and Projections
Frank Ambrose, Acting Chief, State and Governmental Programs Branch, Customer Liaison & Marketing Services Office

Barbara reviewed the meeting schedule for the three upcoming CLMSO 2010 Census Kickoff Meetings. They are:

- CIC/FSCPE/SDC - April 14th - 16th with the Regional Office Staff (Regional Directors, Regional Census Managers, Partnership Coordinators, Field Headquarter Staff)
- Governor's Liaisons - June 13th
- Government and Non-Government Organizations - September 19th

A review of the preliminary agenda for the April 14th - 16th was also discussed. The topics include:

- Census 2010: Panel Presentation
 - Language program
 - Enumeration
 - Linda Franz - Geography - Where we are in the process
- Redistricting - Update
- Communications Campaign Panel
 - Media Program
 - Products
- Overview of Field Activities
- 4 Breakout Groups - CICs & SDCs meet with Regional Offices
- Partnerships
- American Community Survey Update Panel
- Network Business

Tori detailed the FSCPE agenda. The FSCPEs will be with the SDCs and CICs on the first day and part of the third day.

The panel encouraged the group to give input on the draft agenda. An interchange provided for the following suggestions:

- Provide time for states to discuss what they are already doing
- Have smaller discussion sessions on the second day led by steering committee members
- Send out information/reports in advance so attendees can have better questions at the meeting and use the time more wisely
- FSCPE topic briefing session with an overview of population estimates, immigration and housing units
- Expand the time allocated for ACS on the third day to cover the 3-year estimates.
- At the fall meeting include an integration of media campaign with media training
- In order to supplement the face-to-face time, consider webinars that are topic specific such as:
 - Race and ethnicity
 - Data for rural areas
- Suggest that time with Regional Office Staff include topics such as:
 - Hiring
 - An understanding and appreciation of:
 - Regional staff background and skills
 - Skills of SDCs and network capabilities

The networks recognize that more communication is needed within the three networks and thanked the Bureau for putting together this kickoff meeting and for working to help foster better communications of the entire group.

DADS Update

Jeffrey Sisson, Program Manager, Data Access and Dissemination Systems, DSCMO

See handout at <http://www.census.gov/sdc/www/dadjeff.ppt>

Jeff presented an overview of where we are and where DADS is heading (AFF). In addition to products that have been released, the Bureau has been getting ready for the multiyear ACS estimates, the dissemination of the 2007 Economic Census, and improvements/enhancements to the systems.

Between January and August 2008, the Bureau will be disseminating the 2007 population estimates via AFF (the data on AFF will trail the actual release by a couple of weeks). The schedule is as follows:

- January 2008 (Part 1)
 - Nation, States & Puerto Rico (Total Population)
- March 2008 (Part 2)
 - Counties, Puerto Rico Municipios (Total Population)
- April 2008 (Part 4)
 - Nation, States (Age, Sex, Race, Hispanic Origin)
 - Puerto Rico (Age, Sex)
- June 2008 (Part 5)
 - Places and County Subdivision (Total Population)
- July 2008 (Part 6)
 - Counties (Age, Sex, Race, Hispanic Origin)
- August 2008 (Part 7)
 - States and Counties (Housing unit estimates)

The Bureau awarded the DADS II (Data Access and Dissemination) contract to IBM last September 2007. This contract will extend through June 30, 2016 and is for the continuing maintenance of the current system and to put a new system in place. The deployment of the new system will coincide with the release of the 2010 Census data.

Currently AFF is getting between 1.4 - 1.5 million hits per month. A goal of the new system is to standardize the user experience across AFF, while continuing to be flexible. The decision regarding incorporating full dissemination of population estimates into the redesign is being discussed/evaluated and a decision will be made by June 30, 2008. The download center may be able to deliver large files, potentially 5-year estimate SF3 type files (this also is still under discussion). Data Ferret and DADS are on two separate tracks and Advanced Query is an option that could be exercised to use micro data. The group mentioned that the steering committees were invited in to evaluate the DADS I contract and will be willing to beta test DADS II.

Redistricting Program Update

Cathy McCully, Chief, Census Redistricting Data Office

Introduced Deirdre Bishop (Redistricting) and Jamie Rosensen (Geography)

Cathy reviewed and gave an update on the 5-phase Redistricting Program

In the first phase the Bureau collected state plans and visited 47 states. In January 2007 the Bureau released a new data product - State Legislative District Data. Deirdre Bishop has developed a training package on the use of the State Legislative District. The Bureau intends to release 5-year ACS estimates for state legislative districts in November 2010.

It is possible that states may be request special tabulations (race / Hispanic origin / voting age) in the fall of 2009, that will appear as mini-PL-94-171 files from the ACS in advance of the November 2010 product.

The second phase began in July 2007 when the Bureau sent out letters offering states the opportunity to provide their voting districts/precincts plans for the states. The Bureau has 100% participation from all the states including the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The Bureau recently sent out a letter to all states with a request for each state to pick a county for initial review. The Bureau hoped to get the materials out by the end of January, however it now appears training should begin in April. Training will include - MTPS, guidelines, and data shapefiles. In preparation for the training, the Bureau would like the participants to download the data to their computers. The Bureau intends on helping the states get started with this review, working with them one-on-one in person. The balance of each state's counties will arrive in the fall of 2008.

States will be able to design software based on the Phase 2 guidelines. Guidelines will be posted on the Redistricting Data Program website. The Bureau trained regional geography staff in December 2007. Participants should go through the CBT (Computer Based Training) prior to staff coming out to train the states.

The Bureau is developing a prototype product from the dress rehearsal. New to the PL (Public Law) data is an increase from 20 summary levels in Census 2000 to 80; a new table providing data on housing units - vacancy/occupied. The Redistricting Data Office will distribute one-offs to state liaisons and others upon request, as this CD will not be for sale. These data will not be posted to web-site. State and vendors will use these data to develop their redistricting systems.

If a state has any changes to state legislative district plans (2006 elections), please let Cathy know. The Redistricting Office also has solicited changes to congressional and legislative plans from each Secretary of State. Starting in January 2012, voting rights data will be available using ACS and will come out every 5 years. The identification of jurisdictions requiring language assistance will be delivered in the form of a Federal Register Notice.

ACS Rural Statistical Areas Project Update

Doug Hillmer, Assistant Division Chief for Data Projects, American Community Survey Office
Nancy Torrieri, Chief, Communication, Information and Education Staff, American Community Survey Office
Pamela Klein, Statistician, American Community Survey Office

The list of 19 states currently participating in this program are: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Pamela Klein is the key contact person for this project from the Bureau. The handout reiterated the research guidance given to participants and outlined a schedule for 2008. The schedule lists draft milestones dates that are the key events of the life of the project. The 2006 data has been distributed and is being reviewed by participants. The deadline for the current review period is March 21, 2008.

The Bureau is expecting evaluation reports on March 21, 2008. If you can not meet this deadline, please let the Bureau know. By the end of May 2008, the Bureau plans to have a consolidated report prepared from the 19 state individual reports. By the end of August, they would like recommended changes for the next year's profiles so they can finalize any changes by the end of October. The next set of data will be sent out by mid-January 2008.

If any other state wishes to participate, then the state needs to let the Bureau know by summer 2008 and have the JPA (Joint Participation Agreement) signed by August 2008. The JPA that was distributed to all states last fall will not change, except for the signature for the Bureau (Kincannon vs. Murdock). The state lead agency must be the signor of the agreement; however anyone can be involved and do the work (FSCPE, affiliate, coordinating, etc.).

The Bureau can only generate data for "official summary levels". If the SDC steering committee, or others determine that "rural statistical area" should be an official summary level, then a formal request will need to be made. A written request would need to be sent to the Director and the Bureau would need to go through two internal sign-offs, post a Federal Register notice, review the feedback, go back to Statistical Review Committee, and republish in Federal Register notice. This is not a short process, often taking about a year to complete the process.

Committee members wanted the Bureau to clarify what the expectations were in response to the four research questions. The Bureau reiterated that this project is exploratory research and once the Bureau sees the 19 different sets of comments, they may refine what they are requesting, but currently they are looking for open-ended feedback from the states.

Discussion centered on results from this research such as the grouping of the exact regions, the process to group counties, and a determination of whether the grouping satisfies users' needs.

Other issues that are for consideration -

- How often to revise the boundaries (what counties are in an area), especially in areas that may be losing population? Typically the Bureau allows a 5% population drop in an annual period.

- The review does not cross state lines - possibly in the future they could.
- Currently the analysis is using counties as the building-blocks. Should the building blocks be tracts? Could there be a mixture of geographic building blocks (answer was yes).
- The Bureau will also consider RSAs that are groupings of counties that are not contiguous.

It was also mentioned that several states requested different configurations of the county groupings than the Bureau initially provided. This was mostly to keep the areas consistent with planning regions. Other boundary changes are expected to be suggested by participants as part of the analysis.

2007 Economic Census Update

Paul Zeisset, Special Assistant, Economic Planning and Coordination Division

The due date for the Economic Census [was] is Tuesday, February 12, 2008. On February 5th the Bureau sent a note to the SDCs asking them to send out a message to remind employers of the upcoming deadline. The Bureau will also ask SDCs to send out another message after the due date telling companies that it isn't too late to respond.

In March, the Bureau will check responses and send reminder forms to non-respondents. They will resend another form in April & May. The 3rd notice threatens prosecution. Much of the promotion has been targeted to trade associations, chambers of commerce, and payroll providers and newspapers via email.

The response rate for the Economic Census has been declining over the past surveys, and never quite reached 90% among single-unit businesses. Response rates also vary by geographic location and ownership of the company (by race).

In addition to the other ways of promoting, the Bureau has also promoted the Economic Census via their website, industry hot reports, and press releases.

Geographic data will become available between October 2009 and September 2010 on a flow basis. The complete release schedule for the 2007 Economic Census is available online. The Bureau will not be creating PDFs, allowing the Bureau to cut 3-weeks off the schedule from 2002. Everything will be available in AFF, nothing on CD or DVD or drill-down tables. The Bureau will add towns, townships and CDPs, but data will not be available for smaller places; population threshold of 5,000 (July 1, 2006 estimates). To view an Excel spreadsheet with 2002 vs. 2007 Places Comparison Summary go to: <http://www.census.gov/sdc/www/paultwo.xls>.

For the 2007 Economic Census, the Economy-Wide Key Statistics file will be expanded to include non-employers. Industry classifications were changed to reflect minor changes in the 2007 NAICS.

If companies have any questions about their own census forms, please refer them to the 1-800-233-6136 phone number.

Annual Report

Discussion centered on a review of the questions in the form. The group decided to modify the video conferencing question and to delete some open-ended questions. The form will be sent out to the SDC leads by February 13th with a due date from the leads of May 16th.

Other Discussion

The group also discussed the availability of using video conferencing and webinars at affiliate meetings or for training purposes.

The Bureau is still waiting on conference staff to approve the April meeting packet. March 10th is the due date to get the registration information back and a week later to get travel reservations made.

SDC Network Planning

The steering committee discussed the merits of preparing an action/strategic plan to help guide the program as we prepare for the upcoming 2010 Census and multiyear ACS data. The steering committee also discussed how we can improve communications between the three networks, in addition to strengthening our relationship with CLMSO and the Bureau overall.

The committee also discussed the upcoming April 2010 Census Kickoff meeting and agreed to help promote and remind the network of the importance of this meeting.

Friday, February 8, 2008
Embassy Suites, Alexandria

SDC Network Planning (continued)

The steering committee continued Thursday afternoon's discussion. Conversation turned back to the idea of an Action Plan. It was decided that the committee combine the ideas behind a new action plan into a letter to Director Murdock thanking him for meeting with the group and reaffirming the commitment of the SDC network to working with the Bureau as we embark on new challenges in the coming years. Other discussions on Friday included changes to the website and ideas for special plans in recognition of the SDCs 30th anniversary for the annual meeting.