

Xan Wedel (KS)
Chair
Annette Watters (AL)
Vice-Chair
Pam Harris (MT) and
Pam Schenker (FL)
Secretary

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

Julie Hoang (CA)
Barbara Ronningen (MN)
Robert Scardamalia (NY)
Jane Traynham (MD)
Dan Veroff (WI)

State Data Center Steering Committee Meeting June 3-5, 2008 U.S. Census Bureau Meeting Minutes

NOTE: Due to some internal controls at the Bureau, links to the PowerPoint Presentations were not available at the time the minutes were completed. The Bureau apologizes for the inconvenience.

Tuesday, June 3, 2008

Welcome and Introductions

Lisa Blumerman welcomed both the State Data Center and the Census Information Center Steering Committees to the Bureau and to the meeting. Lisa introduced new CLMSO staff including David Donovan as the new Chief of the State and Governmental Programs Branch, Kathy Conklin as new program staff for CIC and three summer interns.

2010 Census Update <http://www.census.gov/sdc/www/danwein.ppt>

Dan Weinberg gave an update on the progress of Census 2010 which included a review of the 2008 dress rehearsal that has been completed except for check-in and data capture of mail returns and coverage follow-up which are ongoing through August.

Dan also discussed the continuation of 2010 Census preparations along with rebuilding the confidence of Congress after the hand-held debacle. The Integrated Communications plan's deadline has been extended to mid-July in order to incorporate comments from the Advisory Committee and Regional Directors.

Something new in 2010 will be the use of postal tracking using intelligent bar codes. The Bureau will know when forms are in the mail.

2010 Planning Database Update <http://www.census.gov/sdc/www/elandad.ppt>

Erin Love and Annette Davis gave an update on the 2010 Census planning database (PDB). The PDB combines housing, demographic, and socioeconomic variables that are correlated with mail nonresponses and undercounts and is used to identify both hard-to-count areas and areas with potentially low mail response rates, in addition to being used for recruitment purposes.

The current PDB (used in the 2008 dress rehearsal) has mapping capability and is being used by Census employees at headquarters and regional offices in order to prepare the 2010 enhanced planning database which is currently under development. To view screen shots and see specific items included in the new version for internal use, click here to view the PowerPoint provided by the presenters.

The public version will contain some similar features as the internal version, but will not report data down to the block level (for disclosure purposes). Development of the public version is set to begin in early FY2009.

Lots of questions and frustrations were expressed by the committee as to the timing of the public release in that it would be too late to be of any real use to states in the 2010 Census planning. The Bureau will see if they can make this product available earlier. In addition, inquiries were made as

to whether access to confidential level summary data could be available for SDCs. The Bureau agreed to look into this request.

2008 Dress Rehearsal Update <http://www.census.gov/sdc/www/tolson.ppt>

Tim Olson covered recruiting, LCO status, partnership efforts, and shutdown process for the recent dress rehearsal sites in Stockton, CA and Fayetteville, NC (see PowerPoint). Census Day was May 1, 2008. Questions from the committees included a request for a list of partners (not individuals, but organizations), in order to identify what the partners learned from the dress rehearsal about their specific constituents. If that is not possible, then the committees requested that the Bureau pull together a "lessons learned" document and to be shared with the networks.

LUCA Update

Linda Franz gave a brief update on the LUCA and BAS programs. There were a total of 11,196 participating governments of which 7,788 have returned their materials to the Bureau, about 69.6%. May 30th was the final deadline with about 77% coming in early and 8% over two weeks late. Most who were not heard from had the deadline of April 4th, so the Bureau is assuming they are not going to participate.

The regional staff are working through the submissions identifying errors and sizing up the problems. Nothing has yet been added to MAF. The deadline for getting addresses ready for hand-helds (address verification - canvassing) is later this summer. The Bureau will provide feedback to governments with submissions so they can move forward with the appeal process if needed.

It was mentioned that the Bureau will not "flag" or "mark" addresses for deletion. Instead, addresses that are not found will be deleted from the feedback file that local governments receive. Local governments will have to compare/match their LUCA submission files and the original master address files to the feedback file to determine what addresses have been removed.

The LUCA appeals process will be set up by OMB. The schedule for LUCA feedback will be on a flow basis between October 2009 and December of 2009, with materials being returned 30 days from receipt. There will be a Federal Register notice for proposed LUCA feedback process. LUCA participants who offered updates will receive up to four different listings of feedback: 1) full post canvas census address list updated with delivery sequence files, 2) list specifying actions for each address that was submitted, 3) block count challenges - goes to participants who challenged block counts - provides information about post addressing blocks "this is what you gave us - here it is" (this option will get maps without Title 13 -summary only), 4) summary of all changes. Participants will receive maps/spatial data along with tabular spot location.

In the appeals process, any specific address corrections, additions, or deletions not accepted by the Bureau can be appealed. For challenged blocks - the address can be challenged, not the whole list. If the Bureau deleted an address, these can also be appealed. Since this phase of LUCA occurs within 6-months of Census Day, the appeals timeline is envisioned to be very tight.

Linda cautioned that block suffixes may not stay the same from LUCA through the appeals process. Linda also talked about OLQ - other living quarters. A determination about these will be made later in the group quarters process.

For the 2009 BAS, there will be no opting out by governments as the 2009 survey is critical. The 2008 BAS went to all governments regardless of size, but a letter was sent prior to the government to check if they were interested in receiving the survey.

2007 Economic Census <http://www.census.gov/sdc/www/marske.ppt>

Robert Marske presented a progress report on the 2007 Economic Census. By the end of May, the response rate was at 65%, which is about 2-2.5% behind 2002. The goal was to be 2% above the return rate for 2002 by this time. The industries with the lower return rates are doctors, dentists, and lawyers. Follow-up calls and replacement forms are part of the process to continue to increase the response rate. For the 2007 round of surveys, the Bureau received a number of calls asking if the forms were real, since there is so much phishing going on for personal information. As always, the Bureau was grateful to the Network for their assistance in getting the word out about the Economic Census.

Annual Meeting Planning

The Steering Committee met to discuss an agenda for the October meeting which will be held at the Bureau headquarters October 8-10, 2008. There was quite a bit of discussion on the ACS training to be provided to participants. The Committee will work with ACS staff to set up the agenda for the training for the second day of the meeting and will try to meet all of the issues brought up by the network concerning what type of training the group would like to receive.

Data Access Tools Briefing

Dan Weinberg, along with other Census staff, spoke about a number of tools that are and will be available to data users. Jeff Sisson spoke about the new and improved American FactFinder (AFF) that will be built over the next three years with a target release of 2011. There will be a full suite of population estimates on AFF with all the characteristics but not until 2011. There also will be an increase in the amount of population estimates data on AFF between now and then.

Cavan Capps discussed DataFerrett and the goal of integrating with AFF, increased speed and multiple views. Cavan explained that the hot reports can be built across geographies and data sets with multiple kinds of interfaces with beginning and advance analysis.

Nancy Gordon discussed the importance of integrating data. She reemphasized that the system that Cavan was describing will have business rules that control data sets access, ensuring that only certain data sets are combined while preserving disclosure rules.

Wednesday, June 4, 2008

American Community Survey

Susan Schechter moderated a panel of Census Bureau staff including Debbie Griffin, Pam Klein, Doug Hillmer, Freddie Navarro, Tony Tersine, Katy Wengert, and Michael Beaghen. All panel members discussed a number of ACS issues.

Tony told the Committees that the Bureau continues to get questions about seasonal residents from what was Q25. The Bureau is doing evaluations of the Q25 question. The Bureau would have difficulty keeping Q25 for programmatic reasons as it was developed as a research question. Susan will let the Interagency Committee know that the SDCs support a question about seasonal residents, perhaps in a different format and hopefully it can be included as a part of a future content test.

Doug and Pam gave a brief background on the Rural Statistical Areas project and a history of the joint project agreement. As the project stands now, all the reports have been read and staff are in the process of summarizing and writing a report which will be shared with all states. New states are encouraged to join the project as the Bureau would like to see more rural states participate. These states will be allowed to do so this year between mid-June and mid-September. If the RSA is to become an official geographic area, an official request will need to come from the SDC network. The process is long. It was suggest that greater participation in the RSA project would go far in documenting the need for an official RSA geographic classification. Nineteen states participated in the first round, would like to see at least half of the states participate in round two.

Debbie Griffin discussed the ACS handbooks that are in development. Currently handbooks are being developed for 10 audiences: general; congressional staff; business community; high school teachers; university researchers; state and local governments; rural areas; federal agencies; PUMS users; and the media. During the development of these 10 handbooks, the Bureau identified four other audiences that stand-alone handbooks are needed for. These are: small local governments; American Indian and Alaska Native areas; state legislators; and Puerto Rico (Spanish version).

Freddie discussed some research that has been done relating to population controls in ACS. As a result of this analysis, the Bureau does not see any reason to change the current methodology, but will redo the research after the 2010 Census to see if any changes are needed. Michael Beaghen discussed the differences between one-, three-, and five-year period ACS estimates. He also highlighted when to use which estimate and when not to, and emphasized the importance of understanding the trade-off between data reliability versus data currency.

SDC/CIC Website Update

Kathleen Ashenfelter spoke about the process of updating the SDC and CIC web pages, hosted on the Bureau's web site. The web sites are out of date and need a complete overhaul. Kathleen and staff are in the process of developing prototypes of these websites to debut at the October meeting.

The Committee members stressed that the sooner the SDC site could be completed the better as it is a good source of information about upcoming meetings, registrations, annual reports, etc.

Retirement Reception for Jay Waite

Committee members were given the opportunity to attend the reception for Jay Waite, retiring Deputy Director of the Census Bureau.

SDC Networking Retooling

With the leadership changes at the Bureau, the steering committee is taking this opportunity to look at and delineate the future direction / value to the Bureau of the SDC network. During this effort, the steering committee also examined whether any structural changes should be suggested. To accomplish this, the steering committee surveyed their tree states. Information was gathered for the following questions:

1. Are you satisfied with the lead-coordinator-affiliate structure of the State Data Center? If not, what causes you problems? How would you change the structure to better meet your needs?
2. How does the number of affiliates in your state's Data Center organization compare with the number allowed by the Census Bureau? Could you use a larger number of affiliates than allowed?
3. Do you have a BIDC network? Is it separate from the SDC network? Please let us know whether and how you'd like to change this structure.
4. What is the relationship between the SDC affiliates in your state and the CICs in your state? Do the separate tracks for the two organizations cause any problems in your state? How would you change these two organizational structures to make them both work better?

As one can imagine, feedback from the states on these issues was varied. After much discussion, the steering committee recognized that there are states which have customized the program in order for it to work best for them. There is no one-size fits all, however one common theme that was recognized was the change in technology since the program's inception and that there is no longer a need to limit the number of affiliates based on the population of a state.

Thursday, June 5, 2008

Business Meeting

The Steering Committee spent some time discussing clarifications to the bylaws. The committee also viewed a draft copy of a proposed agenda for ACS training for the SDC annual meeting in October and made some suggestions to CLMSO to pass along, including reducing the amount of time spent on statistical significance and PUMS and increasing the time spent on communicating ACS data to non-technical users and analytic examples from the SDCs.

Joint SDC/CIC Session

The SDC and CIC Steering Committees, along with Lisa Blumerman, Gary Chappell, Frank Ambrose, David Donovan, Barbara LaFleur, Samantha Proctor, and Wayne Kei from CLMSO, met at the hotel meeting room to learn more about each others network and to discuss ways to improve communication between steering committees and the networks. The committees also discussed how we can encourage partnering opportunities for and between organizations in each network as appropriate, and ways to ensure that the networks work together to achieve common goals such as an accurate and efficient census and to find ways to provide training to participants in both networks.

Meeting Adjourned at Noon.