Notes from SDC Annual Meeting
September 13-15, 2005

The agenda and many of the presentations from this year’s conference are available online at: http://www.census.gov/sdc/www/annualsde05.html.

Meeting started with a warm welcome from Stan Rolark of the U.S. Census Bureau’s Public Information Office. Tuesday morning sessions were held jointly with the FSCPE attendees with Census Regional offices present via teleconference.

2010 Program update provided by Jay Waite. MAF/TIGER enhancements expected to be complete around April 2008. American Community Survey (ACS) has been expanded to include 3,141 counties in the U.S. and 78 municipios in Puerto Rico. Some ACS data products are available for review with plans for an additional 670 base tables as well as more subject and selected population profiles expected before the end of the year. The future of ACS is uncertain due to federal funding currently running under a continuing resolution. 2010 Census planning includes testing the use of hand-held computer for field data collection, coverage improvements for persons and housing units, and the removal of “Some Other Race”. Final results from the 2004 Census test are expected this month. The 2005 test will be conducted on September 15th by mailing approximately 20 questionnaire panels to about 420,000 households. 2006 testing to be conducting in selected census tracts in Travis County, Texas and the Cheyenne River Reservation and Off-Reservation trust land in South Dakota.

Jefferson Taylor touched on the topic of a surrogate speakers bureau that his office would like to get started. This would be a pool of people they could call on to speak to the public when someone from Census is not available. If you are interested in sharing your knowledge, please contact Jeff or Jacque Mason.

Paul Pisano, Chief, Congressional Affairs office, gave an appropriations update. The U.S. House and Senate marks for MAF/TIGER met the President’s 2006 budget request. However, funding for ACS and 2010 planning has been slashed under both plans. This could have dire consequences for both programs.

An update on economic programs was provided by Tom Mesenbourg. The 2002 Economic Census results continue to roll out. Geographic series reports are expected to be complete by the end of September. Subject series expected fall/winter 2005. Data user conferences that were held across the nation are wrapping up. At the conclusion, 42 seminars will have taken place in 27 cities.

2007 Economic Census planning is underway. Several lessons learned from the 2002 census have warranted changes in the 2007 EC. The 2007 EC will not collect data on e-commerce or leased employees. New content will include question(s) on fringe benefits and employer contributions toward employee health insurance and retirement plans.
The Quarterly Services Survey was released in September 2005. Data from the second quarter 2005 to be released September 14, 2005.

Additional foreign trade data to become available online. Specifically, an interactive application for users to extract both imports and exports by 6-digit NAICS category should be available by the end of the year. In an attempt to start to quantify the impact of Hurricane Katrina, exports and imports via the gulf ports of New Orleans, Tampa, Houston, and Mobile are on a new web site featuring data about gulf states.

Alan Tupek gave an **update on demographic programs**. The annual release of Income and Poverty data from CPS and ACS took place on August 30th. In July, the first state estimates of health insurance coverage in 2000 from CPS were released. September data collection may be difficult in some areas due to Hurricane Katrina. Households in areas that are inaccessible will be recorded as vacant.

The **SDC Town Hall meeting** included presentations by Bob Scardamalia (NY), Sarah Breshears (AR), Sue Ebetsch (IL), Xan Wedel (KS), and Annette Watters (AL).

Bob LaMacchia brought the group up to date on the **Geography division**. He began with a big thank you for everyone’s assistance with BAS and LUCA. Improvements for 2010 include TIGER realignment to 7.6 meters or better center line files. The division is asking for assistance in the realignment process from local communities who maintain accurate center line files. The deadline for receiving these files is April 2006.

The Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) is slated to survey places of 5,000+ during CY 2006, places 2,500+ in CY 2007, and all places in CY 2008. Boundary validation will take place early in the summer of 2010 based on responses received by April 1, 2010.

ACS is based on boundaries as of April 1 in the year corresponding to the data.

LUCA submissions are validated by field staff during the pre-census address canvassing operations. January 1 boundary for July 1 population estimates. If you have changes to the LUCA contacts please email **geo.bas@census.gov**.

**Improvements for 2010 LUCA:**
- Single cycle of review for all address types
- More advanced notice
- 1 LUCA, not a 2007 LUCA, 2008 LUCA, etc.
- more comprehensive communication
- proposal for state participation eligibility
- improved training
- long review period (4 months)

Promotional materials to start mailing out next September with invitations for localities to participate expected to roll out between March and November 2007. Work is underway on a new PC-based application for tribal, state, and local governments to make updates electronically.
Feedback from data users is very important. Specifically, would TIGER data online in a web feature or web map server serve needs and replace TIGER/Line files? Are paper maps still needed?

**Statistical areas program update** was provided by Michael Ratcliffe. Block groups for 2000 had a minimum size of 300, looking at raising the level for 2010 with an optimum population of 1,500. Tracts range in size from 1,000 to 8,000 with an optimum population of 4,000 and no anticipated changes for 2010. Question posed regarding the usefulness of Census County Divisions (CCD). CDP’s previously required to meet a 1,000 population threshold; no threshold necessary beginning with the 2000 Census. For 2010, looking to recognize places located within incorporated places.

Wednesday morning was met with transportation problems for SDC attendees so the joint session with FSCPE to discuss the spring conference was abbreviated.

**Director Kincannon** welcomed SDC/FSCPE attendees and provided updates on various programs and appropriation news. The Director also addressed data needs in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and detailed the Bureau’s response to these needs.

Ken Bryson gave the group an update on the **American Community Survey (ACS)**. He stressed that ACS is “less-robust” and users need to be reminded to consider the confidence intervals associated with the data. One- and three-year averages will be subject to filters requiring a median coefficient of variation of 61% or more for detailed tables. If this criteria is not met the table will be collapsed and re-tested. If the data fails the second test, then it will not be published for that specific geographic unit. This will result in differing availability of data for various areas. This filter will not apply to 5-year averages.

An update on **LED** was provided by Jennifer Marks and Jeremy Wu. The LED program currently has 39 states participating with 5 additional states (AZ, LA, MS, RI, and WY) in the process of joining. Jennifer did a live demonstration of the new industry focus products.

Jeremy presented a demonstration of a new application that is in beta testing called LED On the Map. This pilot online mapping application is expected to be released in the next few months. Currently the participation of the first 12 states is funded by ETA. An additional 2 states are participating on a cost basis. This application is meant to address two questions: Where do workers live? And where do workers work?

At present this application contains 2002 and 2003 data though new data will be incorporated as it becomes available. All data is from the second quarter of each respective year. These data reflect origin-destination pairs and differ from the structure of the data available in QWI. Industry locations are from ES202 and residence of workers comes from IRS records. Data is available on the block group level with geography updated annually on July 1. Currently the self-employed and federal government workers are not included.
Jacque Mason gave a brief session on **media training**. She posed an equation to assist us with media contacts:

\[ A = Q + MP \]

where providing a good answer (A) to the media means touching on the question (Q) plus providing a message point (MP). As an item of practicality she stressed stopping or pausing before taking questions from the media, clear your desk and mind, think about the data release and context, and finally put one message point on paper. Hear the question and take the time to reflect before answering. Don’t be afraid to say “I don’t know”. Carol Rogers (IN) approached Jacque before the presentation and the idea for a media website was sparked. This site would be housed on the SDC/BIDC web site and would rely on members submitting their contacts with the press for others to review for ideas and reference.

George Huffman presented an overview of the new **American FactFinder Download Center**. Feedback is critical to the Bureau on this program, as well as others, please take the time to fill out surveys or send your comments in email.

**SDC Business Meeting**

Renee Jefferson-Copeland present highlights from the Annual Report.

A discussion on teleconferencing was initiated by Carol Rogers. Currently the Bureau uses both LiveNet and Microsoft’s Live Meeting. Further discussion to take place within the Steering Committee on the viability of offering remote training and providing remote access for virtual conference attendees.

The Decennial Census Advisory Committee for 2010 is being re-chartered. Previous members, including the SDC, were asked to reapply. The SDC was recently informed that this application was denied.

MOA’s are expiring. Renee and staff will mail out new MOA’s in November along with the revised SDC Handbook.

Steering Committee election results are in. Bob Scardamalia was re-elected with Julie Hoang (CA) and Xan Wedel (KS) being newly elected members. Bob will retain his position as Chair, Annette will assume the duties as Vice-Chair, and Xan will assume the duties of Secretary. Outgoing committee members Sue Ebetsch and John Blodgett (in absentia) were presented with certificates and heartfelt thanks for all their hard work during their tenure on the steering committee.

Stan announced that Betty Jefferies (AZ) has been ill and sent get well wishes and thanks for many years of service on behalf of the network.