

Asian Pacific Islander
Organization

Striving for
Excellence in
Developing Leaders
of Tomorrow



Sixth Annual Training Conference
July 26-29, 2004
Bloomington, Minnesota

MONDAY, JULY 26, 2004

7:00 – 8:00 a.m. CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

12:00 – 5:00 p.m. REGISTRATION

AA/PI SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAM MANAGER TRAINING

MODERATOR: VIRGINIA C. LEWIS, NATIONAL AA/PI EMPHASIS PROGRAM MANAGER

MORNING SESSION

8:00 – 8:15 a.m. **WELCOME**
Andrew Johnson, Jr.
Director, Civil Rights
Division

8:15 – 8:30 a.m. **INTRODUCTIONS**
State AA/PI SEPM's

8:30 – 9:00 a.m. **ROLES AND
RESPONSIBILITIES OF
SEPM's**
Virginia C. Lewis
National SEPM

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. **ETHICS FOR LIAISONS**
Markci Metcalf
Ethics Specialist

10:00 – 10:10 a.m. **BREAK**

10:10 – 11:10 a.m. **ETHICS FOR LIAISONS
(con't.)**
Markci Metcalf
Ethics Specialist

11:10 a.m. – 12:10 p.m. **MD-715**
Susan Flanagan
EEO Specialist, CRD

12:10 – 1:10 p.m. **LUNCH**

AFTERNOON SESSION

1:10 – 1:40 p.m. **RECRUITMENT TOOL
PRESENTATION**
SVersha Kumar
Program Manager,
USDA

1:40 - 2:10 p.m. **HUMAN RESOURCES**
Denise Decker
Human Resources
Specialist, NHQ

2:10 – 2:20 p.m. **BREAK**

2:20 – 4:20 p.m. **DEVELOPING YOUR
BUSINESS PLAN
GROUP**

4:20 – 5:00 p.m. **STATE REPORTS
CERTIFICATES OF
TRAINING**

5:30 – 6:00 p.m. **MODERATOR BRIEFING**

VIRGINIA LEWIS AND MANNY WEI

7:00 - 9:00 p.m. **NATIONAL COUNCIL AND CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING**

TUESDAY, JULY 27, 2004

7:00 – 8:00 a.m. **CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**

7:00 a.m. – noon **REGISTRATION**
1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. **SCHOLARSHIP AUCTION ITEM VIEWING**

8:00 – 8:15 a.m. **OPENING CEREMONY**

MODERATOR: MANNY WEI, VICE PRESIDENT, APIO

Presentation of Colors
Pledge of Allegiance
Moment of Silence
Retiring of Colors
Introductions

8:15 – 8:45 a.m. **WELCOMING REMARKS**

MODERATOR: LARRY YAMAMOTO, STATE CONSERVATIONIST, HAWAII

Pooh Vongkhamdy, President, APIO
Bill Hunt, State Conservationist, Minnesota

8:45 – 9:30 a.m. **SPECIAL REMARKS BY THE CHIEF**

MODERATOR: LARRY YAMAMOTO, STATE CONSERVATIONIST, HAWAII

Bruce Knight, Chief, NRCS

9:30 - 10:15 a.m. **NRCS PROGRAMS/FARM BILL UPDATE**

MODERATOR: BERT CABALSI, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, APIO

Jose Acevedo, Deputy Chief for Programs

10:15 – 10:30 a.m. **BREAK**

10:30 a.m. – noon **DIVERSITY AND CHANGE — THE ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER
LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

MODERATOR: POOH VONGKHAMDY, PRESIDENT, APIO

Byron Kunisawa, President, Cultural Solutions

12:00 – 1:00 p.m. **LUNCH**

1:00 – 1:45 p.m. **IMPACT OF ASIAN CLASS ACTION ON AA/PI COMMUNITY**

MODERATOR: ARUN BASU, REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE, APIO

Farook Sait, Special Assistant to the Director, Office of Civil Rights, USDA

TUESDAY, JULY 27, 2004 (CONTINUED)

NRCS TECHNICAL WORKSHOPS

2:00 – 3:15 p.m.	Workshop 1 Salon A Moderator Ed Miranda	Workshop 2 Salon B Moderator Rich Nordquist	Workshop 3 Salon C Moderator Matt Wung	Workshop 4 Salon D Moderator Virginia Lewis
	HISTORICAL LOOK AT API'S IN FARMING AND SCS/NRCS Douglas Helms, NHQ, and Dudley Kubo, Hawaii	GPS INFORMATION FOR FIELD OFFICE STAFF Mike Rasher, National Cartography and Geospatial Center, Fort Worth	GIS PART I AND II Paul Fukuhara, National Cartography and Geospatial Center, Fort Worth	INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUES IN SOIL SURVEY Hari Eswaran, NHQ

3:15 – 3:30 p.m. **BREAK**

3:30 – 5:00 p.m.	Workshop 5 Salon A Moderator Rich Nordquist	Workshop 6 Salon B Moderator David Rose	Workshop 7 Salon C Moderator Jean Nodzon	Workshop 8 Salon D Moderator Ed Miranda
	HISTORICAL LOOK AT API'S IN FARMING AND SCS/NRCS Douglas Helms, NHQ, and Dudley Kubo, Hawaii	GPS INFORMATION FOR FIELD OFFICE STAFF Mike Rasher, National Cartography and Geospatial Center, Fort Worth	GIS PART I AND II Paul Fukuhara, National Cartography and Geospatial Center, Fort Worth	FIELD OFFICE USE OF THE PLANT MATERIALS PROGRAM Wayne Duckwitz, Bismark Plant Materials Center

5:00 – 6:00 p.m. **AA/PI ADVISORY COUNCIL EMPLOYEES' LISTENING SESSION**
 MODERATOR: VIRGINIA C. LEWIS, NATIONAL AA/PI EPM
 SVersha Kumar, AA/PI Program Manager, USDA
 Hosted by USDA AA/PI Advisory Council

7:00 – 8:30 p.m. **APIO MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

8:30 – 11:30 p.m. **NETWORKING / HOSPITALITY**

WEDNESDAY, JULY 28, 2004

7:00 – 8:00 a.m. **CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST**

7:00 – 7:30 a.m. **REGISTRATION**

7:00 – 5:15 p.m. **SCHOLARSHIP AUCTION ITEM VIEWING**

7:30 – 8:30 a.m. **POLITICAL ACTIVITY, LOBBYING, AND FUND RAISING**

MODERATOR: MANNY WEI, VICE PRESIDENT, APIO

Caryl J. Butcher, Ethics Advisor, NRCS

USDA AA/PI COUNCIL SPONSORED WORKSHOPS

8:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Workshop 9 Salon A Moderator Ron Hemmer	Workshop 10 Salon B Moderator Angela Biggs	Workshop 11 Salon C Moderator Ed Miranda
	DEVELOPING POWERFUL PRESENTATION SKILLS Don Hancock	ENHANCING YOUR CAREER THROUGH PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT Elizabeth Heilpern	TRANSFORMING WORKPLACE CONFLICT Karen A. Travis

12:15 – 1:15 p.m. **LUNCH (ON YOUR OWN)**

1:15 – 5:00 p.m.	Workshop 12 Salon A Moderator Lorna Lincoln	Workshop 13 Salon B Moderator Matt Wung	Workshop 14 Salon C Moderator Marvin Brown
	DEVELOPING POWERFUL PRESENTATION SKILLS Don Hancock	ENHANCING YOUR CAREER THROUGH PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT Elizabeth Heilpern	TRANSFORMING WORKPLACE CONFLICT Karen A. Travis

6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

BANQUET

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: BERT CABALSI

Guest Speaker

VERNON PARKER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, USDA

Dinner

APIO Awards Presentation

APIO Scholarship Recipients Announced

APIO Scholarship Auction Winners Announced

Entertainment

Closing Remarks

THURSDAY, JULY 29, 2004

7:00 – 7:30 a.m.

REGISTRATION

7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

CONSERVATION TOUR

BROWN BAG LUNCH PROVIDED

This will be an all day conservation tour. Sites to be visited are the farm site for the New Immigrant Farmers Education Program in Dakota County, AA/PI farmers (vegetables, flowers, and rotational grazing operation), and a dairy farm methane project.

Please dress accordingly. Field clothes are appropriate. Don't forget your hat, sunscreen, and bug repellent.

5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

NATIONAL COUNCIL AND CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

NRCS PROGRAMS/FARM BILL UPDATE

JOSE ACEVEDO, DEPUTY CHIEF FOR PROGRAMS

Jose Acevedo, a native of Puerto Rico, graduated in 1972 from the University of Puerto Rico with a BS in Agronomy with a major in Agricultural Engineering. He joined the SCS/NRCS in 1972 as a soil conservationist. In July 2003, he was selected by Chief Bruce Knight to serve as Deputy Chief from Programs. As the request of USDA Under Secretary Mark Rey, Acevedo is serving as the Mission Area Representative for the Secretary. He also serves as a member of the USDA Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Leadership Board.

DIVERSITY AND CHANGE: THE ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER CHALLENGE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

BYRON KUNISAWA

Byron Kunisawa is a third generation Japanese American. He was born in an internment camp at Topaz, Utah, and spent his early childhood in an African American community in Oakland, Calif. He holds a Masters Degree in Educational Administration and has spent over 30 years studying and analyzing the relationship between people and institutions. He concluded that bias and discrimination are endemic to the structure and methodology of every system and institution in America.

Kunisawa has developed a theory, called "Designs of Omission," which he believes holds the key to resolving the critical issues of equity and competency. "Designs of Omission" introduces the concept of cultural competency and provides organizations an opportunity to expand their capability for evaluating and developing diverse and talented employees. He is president of Cultural Solutions, based in Napa, Calif.

IMPACT OF ASIAN CLASS ACTION ON AA/PI COMMUNITY

FAROOK SAIT, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS, USDA

Farook Sait was born in India and came to the United States for higher education. He obtained his undergraduate degree from Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Maryland, and Juris Doctor degree from Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C. He is a member of the Maryland Bar Association. In 1994, he completed the Senior Executive Leadership Program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

HISTORICAL LOOK AT API'S IN FARMING AND SCS/NRCS

DOUGLAS HELMS AND DUDLEY KUBO

Douglas Helms earned the AB Degree in American History from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in 1967, an MA Degree (1970) and a Ph.D. (1977) in American History from Florida State University, Tallahassee. From 1973 to 1981, Helms was an archivist at the National Archives where he specialized in the records of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. He became the Historian of the Soil Conservation Service, now the Natural Resources Conservation Service, in 1981, and served as President (1999-2000) of the Agricultural History Society, an 80-year-old scholarly society devoted to the study of agriculture and rural life.

Dudley Kubo is the Planning Engineer and Staff Leader for Water Resources Planning in Hawaii. He received the AB Degree in History from the University of California, Berkeley (1971), MA degree in History from the University of Hawaii (1977), and BS degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Hawaii (1982). He has 21 years of service with SCS/NRCS in California and Hawaii, almost all of it as a Planning Engineer. He is registered as a Professional Engineer in Hawaii. His wife, Susan, is an NRCS Field Office Engineer and they have a son, Coltrane, who is six.

GPS INFORMATION FOR FIELD OFFICE STAFF

MIKE RASHER

Michael Rasher is the National GPS Coordinator for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, located at the National Cartography and Geospatial Center in Fort Worth, Texas. Rasher has 30 years of federal experience, including military and civilian service. He has served as a District Conservationist, a Remote Sensing Specialist, and National GPS Coordinator. Rasher has been a member of the United States GPS International Exhibit Team representing agricultural and natural resource applications. NASA, the Department of State, the Interagency GPS Executive Board, and the Institute of Navigation have recognized him for his contribution to GPS.

WORKSHOP: This training workshop will give participants hands-on experience with the equipment that they currently have in their respective field offices.

GIS PART 1 AND II

PAUL FUKUHARA

Paul Fukuhara serves as Resource Technology Branch Leader at the National Cartography and Geospatial Center (NCGC), Fort Worth, Texas. Responsibilities include managing the NRCS Geospatial Data Warehouse, NCGC Information Technology Manager, and NCGC GIS Training Leader. He started with SCS in the Hawaii State Office and transferred to NCGC in 1989. Fukuhara became an authorized ESRI Instructor for the "Introduction to ArcGIS I" course in 2001.

WORKSHOP: This workshop introduces USDA Service Center Agency (SCA) participants to ArcGIS. Participants will learn how the ArcCatalog, ArcMap, and ArcToolbox applications work together to provide a complete GIS software solution. The course covers fundamental GIS concepts using spatial data stored in the GEODATA folder structure common to all Service Center Agencies. Participants will learn about creating, editing, and working with geo-referenced spatial data, with particular emphasis on tasks that are common to all SCA work flows. Additional topics include querying a GIS database, survey of common data formats, and how to present spatial data clearly and effectively with maps.

INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUES IN SOIL SURVEY

HARI ESWARAN

Dr. Hari Eswaran is the National Leader, World Soil Resources, NRCS, Washington, DC. Eswaran was born in Malaysia and had his early education in Malaysia. He obtained his MS in the Netherlands and his Doctorate of Science in Belgium in 1970. In 1976, he was Visiting Professor at Cornell University and joined USDA-SCS in 1980. He has managed a program of international technical assistance in soil survey and use and management of soils. He is the author or co-author of more than 190 articles and 10 books. He is a Fellow of the Soil Science Society of America and the Belgian Academy of Science, and has received numerous national and international awards for his work including one from the APIO.

WORKSHOP: There is nothing essentially lacking with the soil survey process or the products that have been delivered. Both have survived the test of time. Society has invested in them, indicating that they are useful and needed. Rapid and promising advances in gene-technology convinced decision-makers that this was the solution to global food security. The ability of global land resources to produce food and fiber was no more questioned and Malthusian notions were discarded. Soil scientists in general did not play an active role in these developing issues. When they did wake up at the beginning of the new Millennium, they found themselves being ignored or even retrenched. To brace itself for the

future, Soil Science, in general, and soil survey, in particular, have to undergo several changes in both identity and institutions. A new road map exists. It is left to the new generation of soil scientists to use it.

FIELD OFFICE USE OF THE PLANT MATERIALS PROGRAM

WAYNE DUCKWITZ

Wayne Duckwitz received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Animal and Range Sciences from North Dakota State University. He started his career with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in 1988, and spent 3 years as a soil conservationist and 8 years as a district conservationist in various field offices in North Dakota. In 1999, he accepted the position as the Plant Materials Center Manager at the Bismarck Plant Materials Center in North Dakota. The Center's work involves the testing and development of plant materials and plant technology for use in conservation programs in the Northern Great Plains and Midwest Regions of the United States.

WORKSHOP: Nationally, the USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Program consists of 26 active centers throughout the U.S. This workshop will give participants a brief, National perspective of the Plant Materials Program. It will focus on work activities the Bismarck Plant Materials Center is conducting to help assist NRCS Field Offices and partners in achieving the conservation workload that challenges us.

DEVELOPING POWERFUL PRESENTATION SKILLS

DON HANCOCK

Training Benefits:

- Learn to control and use your stage fright to improve your presentations
- Understand what the audience is expecting
- Discover how to exceed audience expectations
- Identify the right tools to jump-start your presentations
- Learn to be engaging without losing control of your audience
- Select the best presentation style for your speaking opportunity
- Learn the secrets of success used by professional presenters

Overview of Concepts and Deliverables Provided:

- Defining the purpose of your presentation
- The steps to take in preparing your presentation
- Practicing your presentation without becoming stale
- How to focus your presentation on the needs of the audience
- How to use the most effective presentation tools
- Learn to develop and use the openings that will set up the success of your presentations
- How to keep the attention of your audience
- How to better think on your feet and respond to questions
- How to improve your delivery and presentation skills
- How and when to use humor in your presentation
- Summarizing your presentation, without telling people that it's time to go
- Closings used by the pros guaranteeing a satisfied audience

With her
knowledge of how
large corporations

Don Hancock is an Emmy Award winner with 30 years of corporate communication experience. Don makes "performance communication" a business practice. Communication is Don's career. Whether using his in-person training skills, electronic media events, written presentations, or creating message strategy behind the scenes, Don focuses on communication skills that can be replicated.

Don has helped hundreds of organizations in various industries “communicate with corporate clarity.” His interactive training style utilizes adult learning principals to maximize performance improvement. Utilizing his communication skills and motivation techniques, Don has worked with organizations nation-wide to develop high impact marketing programs that get results. Don’s understanding of competitive analysis, relationship selling, and negotiation skills has made him a popular speaker for sales training and conventions. Whether you are making a sales presentation, presenting information to your staff or your boss, or at a party, everyone needs to know how to tell a story better.

ENHANCING YOUR CAREER THROUGH PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

ELIZABETH HEILPERN

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Turnover rates in America have reached a historic high. In most organizations, it is in the 15% to 20% range. In a knowledge-based economy, the major assets of a company change from plant and raw materials to what’s between the ears of its employees. The cost of losing your most valuable asset---your workers, can be staggering. Employee surveys indicate that personal development consistently ranks in the top three employee concerns.

Enhancing Your Career through Personal Development is designed to encourage employees to enter a personal development program which may help them achieve improved success in their current job, upgrade their skills, provide them an incentive to move up within their own career ladder, or move into an alternative career ladder.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As a result of active participation in this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Pinpoint the skills necessary to enhance performance
- Understand how personal development can improve their career and personal lives
- Recognize areas in which they can improve
- Identify and employ opportunities within USDA for personal development
- Complete an action plan for personal development

Elizabeth Heilpern has over twenty years of experience in the field of training and development. In 1990 she established ELM Associates, a management consulting company that designs and delivers workforce development training programs. Ms. Heilpern has designed and presented training programs for state and federal agencies, educational institutions, and private corporations. Her areas of expertise include interpersonal skills, supervisory skills, team building, and change management. She is the 2001 recipient of the American Society for Training and Development’s Independent Entrepreneurial Trainer of the Year.

TRANSFORMING WORKPLACE CONFLICT

KAREN A. TRAVIS

WORKSHOP PURPOSE

To provide the tools and skills needed for the constructive resolution of workplace conflict

LEARNING GOALS

- Practice communication skills that help individuals resolve and manage workplace conflict
 - Learn how to help create an environment that promotes constructive conflict resolution
 - Practice coaching groups and individuals through the constructive resolution of conflict
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LEARNING PRINCIPLES

- Two kinds of conflict: constructive and destructive
- Five conflict styles
- Attributes of a conflict-competent team
- Issues and interests: the what and why of conflict
- Creating lasting agreements

CASE STUDY/ROLE PLAY

- Practice the four step model in groups of four to resolve a conflict in a case study scenario

ACTION PLANNING

- Create an action plan for resolving a conflict important to you, in the real world

BEHAVIOR MODEL

- Four Steps to Conflict Resolution

INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP EXERCISES

- Team challenge: The causes of conflict
- Identifying your own conflict style
- Discovering issues and interests
- Assess your team's conflict competence

DISCUSSION

- Issues and interests worksheet

Karen A. Travis is President and CEO of Travis Consulting Associates, Inc. She holds a BS in Business Management and Marketing from Cornell University and a Master's degree in Organizational Development from Johns Hopkins University.

Travis is qualified to administer the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), DiSC Personality Profile, and other self-assessment tools that help individuals and organizations understand their behavior. She frequently consults with clients to explore work styles, manage differences, and capitalize on employee diversity. Travis is also a certified trainer for the Dana Mediation Institute. The *Self-As-Mediator* and *Manager-as-Mediator* programs focus employees on making working agreements that will reduce conflict and improve performance.

Prior to starting her own consulting practice, her industry experience ranged from being the first full-time employee of a high-tech start-up (developing a precursor to the Internet) including network infrastructure and network management software tools, to serving at New York University, a billion dollar organization with 50,000 employees, as Assistant Director for Finance and Administration, in administrative computing. Travis also served as Director of Information Systems for a 125 person Baltimore-based public accounting firm.

Karen is a member of the American Society for Training and Development, Institute of Management Consultants, Organizational Development Network, and Society for Human Resource Managers.

CIVIL RIGHTS AT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

VERNON PARKER

The first Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Parker was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on April 1, 2003. He acquired the attributes that make him uniquely qualified for his job from a six-year stint as interim pastor at Calvary Church of the Valley in Paradise Valley, Ariz., as well as 12 years in government service, four of them as general counsel then director of policy for the Office of Personnel Management. Parker, a native of Houston who grew up in southern California, said his days as a pastor put his new job in perspective. "When you are dealing with human nature, with hurt, with pain, with death, with family tragedies--it is heartrending--sitting at someone's bedside at the hospital when they die, comforting the spouse who is surviving, and showing true compassion for their feelings at the same time. Pastor was the most difficult job I've ever had, but it was the most rewarding job, too."



LEADERSHIP/VISIONARY AWARDS

BERT CABALSI
KENT MATSUTANI

BERT CABALSI is an Area Engineer in California serving the Petaluma Field Office. He has the technical oversight to 13 engineers in Area 1. He presently serves as the Executive Vice President for APIO. He's been involved in NRCS Civil Rights serving first as the AA/PI SEPM for California from 1998 – 2001. He also served as Regional Representative for APIO for the West Region.

KENT MATSUTANI has worked for NRCS for over 26 years. He has worked as a District Conservationist for 23 years overseeing a 3-county area within the South Platte Natural Resources Conservation District. He has served as APIO Vice President from 1999 – 2001. He was involved in registering APIO as a Non-Profit 501c Organization. At present, he is the Assistant State Conservationist of NRCS-Hawaii. He has already done Outreach to Hawaiian Homeland tenants to increase participation in Farm Bill Programs. He is married and has 2 children, ages 4 and 8.

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION

R. DAVID FISCHER
BENITO MAR

R. DAVID FISCHER is a Engineering Specialist in New Mexico. He is a Charter Member of APIO. He has served on numerous committees to promote APIO mission and most recently served as Secretary of APIO. He is recognized for his abilities to convert complex ideas to a user-friendly level. Dave and his wife, Arlene, recently celebrated their 25th anniversary. They have four daughters, one son, and one granddaughter.

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN ASIAN / PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITY OUTREACH

DUDLEY KUBO
DELORES ALMAND

DUDLEY KUBO is a Planning Engineer and Staff Leader for Water Resources Planning in Hawaii. He has 21 years of service with SCS/NRCS in California and Hawaii. He actively works with communities affected by watershed projects and other NRCS activities by promoting and facilitating community processes and meetings. He is also a Director for the Honolulu Federal Credit Union. His wife, Susan, is a NRCS Field Office Engineer, and they have a son, Coltrane, who is six years old.

DELORES C. ALMAND has been a strong advocate of the AA/PI Program on her state's civil rights committee. She provided technical assistance to the Georgia Civil Rights Advisory Committee in developing Plan of Operations including the AA/PI Program Plan of Operation. She gave a report on the 2003 AA/PI Conference to the Civil Rights Advisory Committee and stressed the fact that all employees are accountable for ensuring that all cultures are employed by NRCS and emphasized the need for employment of Asian Americans in Georgia. In the NRCS newsletter, Conservation Connection, provided a one-page article with pictures on the Asian Pacific Islander Organization 5th Annual Training Conference. This was adopted from the Arizona Employees Newsletter Article by Winnie Chen and Jean Nodzon including the pictures. She has provided one-on-one employment counseling

to Asian Americans interested in working in Georgia, and has had subject matter experts review their transcript to ensure they are qualified academically. Delores has also reviewed application packages of prospective employees and provided points on what to address in application.

OUTSTANDING MEMBERS OF THE ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER ORGANIZATION

Dr. Arun Basu
Manny Wei

DR. ARUN BASU has continually raised and presented issues of concern affecting the APA communities or customer groups, nationwide, for the awareness of the APIO membership for future support and actions to address the issues. He has provided the leadership and coordinated the invitation and presentation of outstanding APA farmers for receipt of Secretary's achievement award during the May, 2001, AAPI Heritage Month Celebration in USDA. His current interests lie in the enhancement of career opportunities for young Asian Pacific Americans. He is committed to working closely with the leadership of APIO to advance the cause and under representation status of APA employees at different grade levels in NRCS, and in USDA. He is already working on this issue with the Departmental administration and the Secretary's AAPIAC.

MANNY WEI is a charter member of the APIO and has been an active member from the beginning. He currently is the Vice President and has done an outstanding job of organizing this year's training conference. He has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills, attending to even the smallest details, to ensure that this year's conference will be the best one yet.

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

BILL HUNT
JOLENE LAU

WILLIAM HUNT, State Conservationist for the NRCS in Minnesota, has done an outstanding job of coordinating the NRCS Student Temporary Employee Program (STEP) with Humboldt High School in St. Paul, Minn. Humboldt has a high student population of Southeast Asian/American students. Hunt's efforts in combining and coordinating these programs since September 2002 has enabled 6 Asian American students from Humboldt High to apply for part time employment with NRCS while still attending high school or college. This combined Federal/Community/Civic/Academic Program with Humboldt High School offers opportunities for young API students to gain valuable work experience in the federal workforce while also helping NRCS with ever increasing State Office workloads. Mr. Hunt is commended for his efforts in providing an excellent opportunity for Asian American Students to gain valuable federal work experience and for these students to consider a potential career opportunity with NRCS in Minnesota.

JOLENE LAU is a third generation Chinese, born and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii. In 1991, while still a senior in high school, she started with the NRCS part time, as a GS-1 assisting the personnel section. In 1993, she had the opportunity to work in Public Affairs and enjoyed the projects so much that she directed her education towards Communications. She took her new career to California, serving in Davis and Salinas, doing outreach work and also publicizing farm bill success stories of Asian recipients. Jolene returned to Hawaii as the Public Affairs Specialist and has already started outreach efforts to minority groups. Jolene is married to her high school sweetheart, and they have one child.
