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## ARC Monthly Bulletin – October 2013

### *Valuable information for ARC's customers*

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#### FULL STORIES

##### **1. Welcome New Customer**

We are pleased to welcome the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council (GCERC) to our customer base. The services we are providing GCERC include: Financial Management, Procurement and Travel. With the addition of GCERC, we now provide services to 83 Federal agencies.

For additional information, contact Michael Satterfield at 304-480-5527 or [Michael.Satterfield@bpd.treas.gov](mailto:Michael.Satterfield@bpd.treas.gov).

##### **2. Another Successful Fiscal Year**

We would like to extend our appreciation to all of our customers for a productive and successful 2013. During the past year, we met with a majority of our customers and plan to continue this practice going forward. We gained valuable feedback in these visits that we will use to improve our services as we move into the coming fiscal year. We especially appreciate those customers who worked with us to review and sign their agreements prior to October 1. We are actively working with customers to ensure that outstanding agreements are signed.

For additional information, contact Michael Satterfield at 304-480-5527 or [Michael.Satterfield@bpd.treas.gov](mailto:Michael.Satterfield@bpd.treas.gov).

##### **3. Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Our Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey is officially closed. We are currently analyzing the final results as we look for improvement opportunities, as well as, areas where we are excelling. We appreciate all agencies who took the time to respond. We will use your feedback to the maximum

extent. If you did not receive our annual survey but would like to provide feedback, please contact your customer service representative.

For additional information, contact Michael Satterfield at 304-480-5527 or [Michael.Satterfield@bpd.treas.gov](mailto:Michael.Satterfield@bpd.treas.gov).

#### **4. CARS Transition Update**

Over the past several months, our financial management staff has been working with our customer agencies, GWA's Customer Relationship Management Team and internal stakeholders to successfully transition all our financial management customer and system platform agencies to become Intragovernmental Payment and Collection (IPAC) and commercial deposit and payment CARS reporters. As noted in the March newsletter, Full CARS reporters will no longer submit the monthly SF-224 to Treasury. Instead, Fund Balance with Treasury activity will be reported at the point of entry into Treasury's cash applications by submitting component Treasury Account Symbol (TAS) and Business Event Type Codes (BETC) for each cash transaction.

On October 1, we transitioned 7 agencies to CARS, bringing the total number of full CARS reporters to 1, and the total number of IPAC and commercial deposit CARS reporters to 13. After the October 1 transition and adding more agencies to the CARS transition pilot, there are 11 ARC customer agencies transacting as pilot IPAC and commercial deposit CARS reporters.

One agency was a commercial payments CARS reporter before we began providing financial management services to the agency. Treasury has advised that they will not transition any additional ARC serviced agencies until Oracle releases and ARC successfully implements a patch that will provide component TAS and BETC on the daily Secure Payment System summary and detail files. This patch is not expected to be received until spring 2014 and we hope to successfully test and implement the patch for all commercial payments no later than August 1, 2014.

Last month we were informed by GWA's Customer Relationship Management Team that the pilot window will not be extended past December 31, 2013. We have been in contact with our platform agency CARS contacts to address the impact to their transition plans.

Our goal is to have all financial customer agencies transitioned to CARS and to assist our system platform agencies as they transition their operations to accommodate CARS transaction reporting by Treasury's mandate of October 1, 2014.

For additional information, contact Brian Casto at 304-480-7018 or [Brian.Casto@bpd.treas.gov](mailto:Brian.Casto@bpd.treas.gov) or.

#### **5. 2013 Federal Benefits Open Season**

The 2013 Federal Benefits Open Season runs from November 11 through December 9, 2013. The annual open season allows eligible federal employees to elect or make changes to Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) coverage, Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) coverage, and Flexible Spending Account (FSA) contributions. The 2014 brochures, plan comparison tools, and other open season resource materials will be available on the Office of Personnel Management's website ([www.opm.gov/insure](http://www.opm.gov/insure)).

For additional information, contact our Employee Benefits Branch at 304-480-8275 or [benefits@bpd.treas.gov](mailto:benefits@bpd.treas.gov).

## 6. TSP Contribution Limit Reminder

Employees covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) who hit the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) annual contribution limit before the end of the tax year will miss out on agency matching contributions. The contribution limit for the 2013 tax year is \$17,500.

TSP contributions—including agency matching contributions—for FERS-covered employees will stop when the annual limit is reached. To maximize receipt of agency contributions, FERS employees should continue investing at least five percent of salary—the amount that produces the maximum agency contribution—during every pay period of the tax year. (Employees covered by the Civil Service Retirement System receive no agency contributions to TSP and are not affected by this issue.)

TSP's "[How Much Can I Contribute](#)" calculator can assist you in calculating the remaining TSP biweekly contributions needed to maximize agency contributions. You can also read more about the TSP annual contribution limit at <https://www.tsp.gov/making-contributions/contribution-limits/>.

If you wish to change your TSP contribution amount, access the Employee Personal Page (<https://www.nfc.usda.gov/epps>) or complete a new TSP-1 (<https://www.tsp.gov/PDF/formspubs/tsp-1.pdf>). TSP-1s should be emailed to [benefits@bpd.treas.gov](mailto:benefits@bpd.treas.gov) or faxed to 304-480-8019.

For additional information, contact our Employee Benefits Branch at 304-480-8275 or [benefits@bpd.treas.gov](mailto:benefits@bpd.treas.gov).

## 7. DISCOVERER VIEWER Virtual Training - Scheduled for November

We provide DISCOVERER refresher training to assist our customers in their efforts to effectively transition newly hired staff and meet other potential training needs. This training is provided to our customers at no additional charge. We will conduct virtual training sessions November 13 and 14, 2013. We will be sending all current DISCOVERER VIEWER users information about how to sign up for the classes, via email.

For additional information, contact Oracle Support at 304-480-8000 (Option 3) or [OracleSupportTeam@bpd.treas.gov](mailto:OracleSupportTeam@bpd.treas.gov).

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