REWARDS AND RECOGNITION
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DIVISION OF PARK AND RECREATION TECHNICAL SERVICES

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This information kit is for use by managers, supervisors, and non-supervisory employees alike. This kit will help readers to:

- Understand how rewards and recognition build a productive organization and develop each individual’s skills, talents, sense of confidence and value.
- More effectively utilize the Incentive Awards Program, as the cornerstone of formal recognition efforts.
- Find ways to supplement conventional cash and honor awards with more frequent and individually tailored forms of reinforcement.
- Take immediate steps to improve employee recognition in their own parks and work units.

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This information kit is about how rewards and recognition can be utilized to stimulate performance and build a more positive, supportive work environment.

Park Service employees are certainly motivated by doing complex and challenging work, and seeing it have real impact. But we also have the human needs to feel recognized by management, our peers, and those we serve, and to be rewarded for our individual and team accomplishments. We want others to know what we are accomplishing, and to hear their encouragement and thanks. This is what keeps us going with fresh energy through difficult and long term assignments, intense demands, personal risk, and day-to-day frustrations.

Most management consultants agree that the degree to which individuals in any organization, private or public, feel recognized and appreciated has a great deal to do with both job satisfaction and the organization's ability to accomplish its objectives. For this reason, many excellent organizations are today making extraordinary use of positive incentives at the work place. In these organizations, rewarding performance has become the cornerstone of all efforts to improve work quality and productivity, not to mention the overall work environment. These organizations know that productivity depends on people perceiving a clear connection between their individual efforts, a project's outcome, and the recognition or reward they receive.

Do NPS employees get the rewards and recognition they need to do their jobs effectively? The 1983 National Park Service employee survey reported the following:

* 60% of respondents felt that performing their job especially well was not likely to result in a cash award or Quality Step Increase, with another 21% believing it was only "somewhat likely" they would be so rewarded.

* 30% of respondents felt that performing especially well was not likely to bring recognition as a good performer, with another 28% believing it was only "somewhat likely" such efforts would bring recognition.

These findings signal that, as an organization, we are not getting across the message that we care about our people and value their contributions. One NPS supervisor said it this way, "How often we neglect the human resources. Yet without the human resources we can't maintain the natural and cultural resources." Tight budgets, intensified demands, slowed career advancement, and criticism of public servants all take their toll on the human spirit. Today it's more urgent than ever that we provide an added measure of
positive feedback and support.

Some managers and supervisors may be surprised by how much leeway and authority they have when it comes to recognizing staff. **Rewards and recognition are among a supervisor's most valuable and flexible management tools.** Managers truly shape the work environment by what they choose to reward and not reward.

While rewarding and recognizing staff is primarily a supervisory responsibility, all NPS employees have a role to play in providing feedback and reinforcement to others and in getting for themselves the level of feedback they need to do their jobs effectively. Each of us can help make NPS an organization that encourages excellence and demonstrates its concern for employees.
"If people feel good about themselves, you don't have to worry about the quality of work, or about the quantity of work getting done, because that will be taken care of."... NPS trail supervisor

CHAPTER 2

WHY REWARD AND RECOGNIZE PEOPLE?

- What the proven and quantifiable benefits of rewards and recognition are.

- Why rewards and recognition have a profound impact on the individual's ability to get the work done.

- How rewards and recognition benefit the organization and manager.
Rewards and recognition -- or their absence -- have an undeniable impact on people in an organization. The evidence is strong and confirmed by public sector and private sector experience alike. A 1975 National Science Foundation-supported study at New York University found recognition and reward to be the principal factor in creating productive, satisfied employees.

- A program of awards developed at a west coast naval shipyard in 1972 resulted in measurable productivity gains of 18%, with overtime and backlogs virtually eliminated. The Navy's awards program, which applied to data transcribers, involved weekly comparisons between actual performance and a pre-determined standard. Each month, employees received a separate check equal to 11% of the savings resulting from exceeding the standard.

- At Diamond International's Palmer Division, a 1980 survey showed that 79% of employees did not feel rewarded for a job well done. 65% felt they were not treated respectfully by management. A concerned management launched its "100 club" which awarded employees points for cost saving ideas, high attendance, and exceeding production goals. On earning 100 points, an employee was given a "100 club" blue nylon jacket and patch. Additional points earned other gifts such as blenders, clocks, cribbage boards, etc. Three years later, attitudes had radically changed. 77% of employees now felt rewarded for a job well done and 73% thought the company showed concern for them as people. And, productivity gains over the three year period were valued at over $1 million.

Rewards and recognition work to nurture initiative and extra effort. As the above examples show, they can increase productivity, improve job satisfaction, and help create a more humane work environment. By design or as spin off benefits, reward and recognition efforts can also result in:

- reduced absenteeism
- reduced turnover
- fewer accidents
- fewer grievances
- improved labor relations
- attainment of specific program objectives
WHY THE INDIVIDUAL RESPONDS

At its most basic, recognition is a form of communication between the organization and the individual. The form of reward of recognition and how it is given, sends a message to people about how much their individual contribution is valued. The entire system of rewards and recognition -- taken together with such factors as pay scales, job design, and involvement in decisions -- communicates to what extent the organization regards its people as key to reaching its goals.

People work for many reasons beyond the paycheck. One recent study found that, given the choice, 70% of Americans would rather work then retire. For many people, work is more than a task or a place. It is an arena to exercise freedom and creativity, to show competence, and otherwise feed internal motivators. Individuals vary in what keeps them energized day in and day out. Their "internal motivators" can include the need or desire to:

- provide service to others
- constantly challenge and stretch their capabilities
- be stimulated by new ideas
- influence/have a positive impact
- be "part of the action"
- interact with others/be part of a team
- see accomplishment
- be respected for their abilities
- feel needed and appreciated
- feel important

Many experts question whether supervisors can really "motivate" anyone at all. What supervisors can do, they suggest, is provide an environment where each person's drive and internal motivators are free to flourish. For example, many achievement-driven people need their achievements confirmed. Through rewards and recognition, management validates the importance of their achievements to the organization. It has been said that the more "self-motivated" the person, the greater the passion for recognition.

Another obvious function of rewards and recognition is to clarify to the recipient, "what's in it for me." Paychecks are easily taken for granted, even when they recognize differences in performance or level of responsibility. Additional "perks," recognition, and team celebrations, directly linked to specific accomplishments, give people added reason to perform on a day-to-day basis.
Rewards and recognition remove the self imposed barriers that hinder performance by building the positive self image necessary to work effectively, decisively, and with conviction. This critically important function of rewards and recognition is often overlooked. Rewards and recognition provide a needed "psychological boost," and are often followed by:

- renewed confidence and self esteem
- the release of creative energy
- lowered anxiety and tension
- redoubled efforts
- a clearer sense of direction and purpose

In contrast, the absence of recognition leads to insecurity and doubts about one's self-worth. People can lose the capacity to act, with an enormous drain on an organization's overall productivity. In fact, the "burnout" so commonly seen in the public sector has been ascribed not so much to hard work, as to hard work in the absence of positive feedback and confirmation of accomplishment.

FRONTLINE PERSPECTIVES

Regardless of their grade level or program specialty, Park Service employees value recognition. Consider these statements:

"Am I doing good or bad? Give me something to go by." ..... maintenance foreman

"When I get an award I get my ego boosted ... It makes me want to go out and earn it." ..... regional office employee

"It takes an extraordinary individual with so much self-confidence to push forward regardless of what's happening around them." ..... assistant superintendent

"I think it would be a very lonely feeling to feel like you just worked, and didn't know whether your product was going to be used or appreciated." ..... personnel assistant

Even those employees who described their own motivators as "self-pride," "seeing work accomplished," "doing the best I can," also stressed that recognition, whether formal or informal, gave them the fresh energy, "the shot of adrenaline," to keep going. Several NPS employees commented that recognition was particularly valuable at certain points in their careers, including:

- when moving up into the ranks of supervisor
- when isolated from others on a particular project
- when first starting with NPS as a seasonal
- when breaking into areas non traditional for women
HOW THE ORGANIZATION GAINS

When individuals are able to stand out, based on their achievements, the entire organization benefits. But it is in an organization's interest to do more than recognize "star performers." It should enable everyone to be a key contributor. All of us, in our own spheres, want this chance. Management can help by letting people know what it wants done and supporting what is done well. Having a system of rewards and recognition encourages management to:

PAY POSITIVE ATTENTION

Management tends to pay most of its attention to problems, while devoting little time to the majority of people who do their jobs well. Many managers find it easier to pinpoint the negative then at accentuate the positive. Rewards and recognition provide a focus for positive attention.

Consider this anecdote: As part of a company-wide productivity improvement effort, lights were turned up. Productivity improved. At a later date, lights were lowered. Again productivity improved. The now-famed "Hawthorne effect" is described as followed: Productivity has less to do with lighting than being given a little extra attention.

PROVIDE RELEVANT FEEDBACK

People need relevant, task-specific feedback related to their own performance. They are entitled to know what their contribution to the organization is, and how they might improve their performance and chance for advancement. One recent study of federal employees found that only 13% were receiving the feedback they needed to improve performance. The 1983 NPS employee survey found that 39% of respondents never or rarely received constructive feedback from supervisors. Rewards and recognition are one important way to provide an increased level of feedback.

GIVE PEOPLE REASONS TO EXCEL

People need a reason to excel that is, an incentive. Incentives are aspects of the workplace that give people a reason to accomplish specific work. They can be highly personal. The system of incentives in an organization is complex and is only partially controlled by individual managers. Sometimes unintended disincentives give people reasons not to accomplish work (as when a budget process disproportionately cuts the already cost-conscious, or grade levels don't recognize real competency).
By emphasizing and thoughtfully developing incentives, organizations move away from dealing with people in an across-the-board fashion and give them reasons to excel. Generally, the following is true:

- Positive incentives (those that motivate by promise of a reward) are more powerful than negative incentives (those that motivate by threat of punishment).

- Intrinsic rewards (those that are part of the work process itself) are more long lasting than extrinsic ones (those that come after the work is done).

- The more personal and individualized the incentive or reward the greater its impact on the recipient.

- Changing the system of incentives and rewards changes the way people act.

Rewards and recognition are a key part of the incentive picture. Along with adverse actions against non-performing employees, they help define the consequences of doing and not doing certain things. All employees want to see that those who contribute are rewarded and those who don't are penalized.

**FRONTLINE PERSPECTIVES**

These quotes come from managers and supervisors who have taken the incentive, reward, and recognition message to heart:

"The incentive system, whether formal or informal, has to keep everybody up and part of the team ... to make sure we get the National Park Service mission accomplished." ... regional training officer

"Everyday we're in an incentive program, when we take the time to tell someone they've done a good job." ... trails supervisor

"Above everything else, I think that I've learned that I get more response by recognition. Supervisors need to realize that their staff is the most important part of their job, and if their staff looks good, they look good." ... site manager

As the last quote indicates, some NPS managers believe it is they who have gained the most by using rewards and recognition. By their account:

- more gets accomplished, as people see their efforts lead to reward
- better control exists over what gets done, since people tend to concentrate efforts where there is promise of reward
- morale goes up, as people feel individually important
- positive interactions increase as the manager becomes known as a bearer of good tidings
- teamwork increases, as people take pride in being part of a winning team
"It's terribly important when giving an award that the reasons be well documented, and that the person be recognized by their peers as deserving." ... NPS communications specialist

"So many people have come and gone, without ever being recognized." ... NPS secretary

**CHAPTER 3**

**WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T**

- Why many awards programs fail to motivate.
- How to design a reward system that has credibility with employees.
- What kinds of rewards are most meaningful to employees.
AVOIDING THE PITFALLS

Many reward and recognition programs fall short of their potential to motivate people and make them feel valued. In many organizations both private and public, employee awards presentations have become hollow practices, while opportunities for truly meaningful recognition are continually passed up.

One far reaching study of private sector companies, conducted by the Recognition Products Group of the Balfour Company in 1981, found that 85% of 346 personnel administrators felt their organizations did not fully respond to people's needs for recognition. Among the reasons recognition programs ran into problems were:

- continuing programs as a legacy of the past
- failing to link recognition to a person's actual accomplishments
- not asking recipients for input on the program

Some of the employees surveyed in the Balfour study voiced these concerns over awards programs:

"If awards were given with pride, we would accept them with the same pride."
"It was meaningless....I threw it out."
"I want to be recognized as a person, not just get a pin after five years."

Despite such criticism, Balfour study participants cross-cutting numerous job functions concurred that meaningful recognition from both peers and supervisors was absolutely vital to a sure sense of accomplishment.

THE FEDERAL PICTURE

In 1979, the General Accounting Office published a study entitled Does the Federal Incentive Awards Program Improve Productivity? That study reviewed 13 incentive awards programs at 9 different agencies. (NPS was not one of the agencies reviewed.) A questionnaire sent to employees at these agencies revealed that:

* 60% felt their organization's program did little or nothing to change their job motivation.
* 40% said the program has little or no effect on their work group productivity.
A third did not think improving their performance would affect their chances to receive an award.

60% were not sure cash awards were usually presented to the most deserving.

Despite such doubts, 58% of those who responded to GAO's survey said they would find ways to improve their performance if incentives for doing so were meaningful, well administered, understandable, relevant, fair, predictable and timely. A tall order! GAO's own analysis confirmed that some average performers (16%) and even a few below average performers (2%) were receiving awards. In GAO's view, the Federal Incentive Awards Program suffered in many agencies because it lacked the following components:

- direct linkage with organizational goals
- objective system for setting, communicating, and measuring performance
- knowledgeable and motivated managers
- timely and relevant awards
- evaluation of results

Despite the program's shortcomings, the then Civil Service Commission still estimated a net return to the government of $4 worth of tangible benefits for every $1 granted in awards. (More recently, OPM has estimated a much higher return.)

SUCCESSFUL REWARD SYSTEMS

Designers of any system of incentives, rewards, and recognition have two basic challenges:

1) To design (and sustain) a system that is credible and regarded as truly fair by a majority of employees; and
2) To provide rewards that are meaningful to current recipients and relevant to their accomplishments.

Key factors that make for award system credibility with employees are:

Consistency with "organizational fabric." Reward systems are closely linked to such fundamental issues as information sharing, participation, and employment security. As the White House Conference on Productivity (August, 1983) found, rewards are but one part of the fabric of any organization. If people are denied information relating to how the
organization is doing and opportunities to participate in decisions, it is difficult to influence performance in any meaningful way. And if people feel they have no stake in the organization and its future, any formal reward system will seem superficial.

**Clear, consistent connection to performance.** The best reward systems follow directly and clearly from the actions being rewarded. People see a connection between their output and rewards. The connection must be sure and the reward generous or significant enough to warrant extra efforts. The Federal Office of Personnel Management found that the key variables for getting people to improve performance were award size, certainty, and frequency, as well as the understandability and acceptability of award criteria.

**Broad base of winners.** Award criteria should be known ahead of time, and the competition open to all. This creates equality of opportunity, a sense of fairness, and a broad base of potential winners. In many organizations, people are rewarded for reasons unclear to them and their peers. Rewards seem arbitrary, justified after the fact rather than earned. They may be seen as special favors to the few, rather than a goal to which all can aspire.

- Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson, authors of *The One Minute Manager*, describe the situation as akin to bowling with a sheet held up to obscure the pins at the end of the bowling alley. No one can see what they are aiming for, but occasionally they hear the pins fall.

**Link with continued opportunities.** As described by Rosebeth Moss Kanter in *The Change Masters*, some of the most meaningful rewards are not "payoffs" for completed work, but continued opportunities to demonstrate competence -- the chance to play again. Investment-centered rewards include more work, special assignments, the additional resources to complete a job, or perhaps simply the go-ahead to follow through on an idea. These kinds of rewards send the message, "I bet you'll succeed again," and may also further an individual's own career goals.

**Value acknowledged by management.** In some organizations, rewards and recognition are anything but sterile or stale. They are highly valued by management, which gives them a certain credibility with all employees. Awards presentations literally celebrate the achievements of the organization and its people, and are an occasion for participation, shared rituals, and a degree of fanfare or "hoopla" that can range from presentation of a bag of M&M's to an extravaganza where no expense is spared. Achievers gain visibility and prestige before their peers and upper management. The message is clear: People are the lifeblood of the organiza-
Terrence Deal and Allen Kennedy, authors of Corporate Cultures, describe how in some companies rewards and recognition are used to create "super heroes," because it is often easier to model after someone than to follow instructions. These super heroes are used to send a symbolic message about the kind of traits and achievements the organization values most.

**IS MONEY A MEANINGFUL REWARD?**

Even the highest paying companies have trouble motivating their people which leads many managers and consultants to say that money per se cannot make people work harder. But is this really true? Evidence shows that money can motivate if we keep certain considerations in mind:

- **Award Size and Frequency.** Private sector studies show that a majority of people want to be paid for performance. However, people will not work harder for small differences in pay. (Some companies pay up to twice as much to one employee as to another with the same level of education and experience.) Also, paying out bonuses twice a year is more effective than once a year, with some companies paying as much as one-third of an employee's pay in the form of bonuses. Complicating the issue is this finding: If awards are too large, they may cause resentment since employees sense that large awards diminish the available pie. **Awarding one or two "superstars" with huge sums of money is not as effective as giving reasonably large sums to a number of people.**

- **Pay for Performance Plans.** Many organizations (including the U.S. Navy) are using some type of performance-linked pay plans, where employee pay is based on exceeding a certain standard or achieving certain results. Studies show the following: Overall, such plans have positive effects, but can be neutralized in climates of insecurity and mistrust. **Individual incentive plans are more effective than group plans.** Group plans do, however, provide some productivity lift if the group is small and "face-to-face." Organization-wide plans (for example, profit-sharing) are not as effective among rank and file, perhaps because they feel less able to influence results. (Many studies urge care in defining what will be measured and rewarded, since employees will tend to focus their energies there.)
Cash and Grade Levels. GAO's 1978 study reported that cash awards were given at all grade levels but were more likely to be given to lower level employees. Honorary awards went mostly to higher graded employees, who had already been "paid enough in salary." When GAO surveyed employees, however, it found that a high percentage of employees at all grade levels liked cash awards if the amounts were large enough to make a difference. GAO concluded there was no justification for limiting awards for higher paid employees to praise.

In sum, money can be an effective incentive if people believe their increased output will be rewarded. Because monetary awards may also provide honor, prestige, and a sure sense of accomplishment, the effects of cash alone are hard to isolate. We know that for some people cash is not necessary, and that for others, cash by itself is not enough.

The 1983 NPS Employee Survey confirmed that salary increases and cash bonuses were among the most popular awards. But employees also suggested other forms of recognition, including: letters, certificates and ceremonies; increased responsibilities; and chances to use a special skill.

WHAT ABOUT "TROPHY" AWARDS?

There is no question that prestigious, honorary awards are valued by people for the singular recognition they bring. On the other hand, many managers write off simple and more broadly available forms of recognition, including plaques, patches and certificates, as not sophisticated enough for their employees. But experts argue that most people do, in fact, value simple reminders of their achievements and items with "trophy" value that can be displayed. (Experts further point out that a key aspect of awards is their emotional appeal -- their ability to evoke associations and memories. In this regard, "trophy" awards have the advantage of not simply being absorbed into the family budget, as cash awards may be.) As one Park Service employee summed it up, "People may call it corny, but we get into it here."

Some of the success of the already mentioned Diamond International awards program has been attributed to the way the program was set up. The blue nylon jackets, emblazoned with the company logo, provided visible evidence of employee achievements. Within three years, 90% of the plant's workforce had earned their way into the "100 club."
One Park Service employee, who has served in the military, put it this way, "In the Army, you wear your recognition. Everyday you walk around with your medals on your chest, and that's the big difference. You don't just slip them in a drawer."

Almost any kind of award can "work" with certain individuals under certain conditions. Key to remember is that awards are as much valued for what they signify as what they are in any tangible sense. Do people really believe the person being awarded is deserving?

RULES OF THUMB FOR REWARD SYSTEMS

- Clearly define, measure, and communicate what will be rewarded. (Let people know upfront how they can win an award.)

- Reward steps in the right direction, not just final results.

- Link awards to the organization's objectives, and thus real accomplishment.

- Administer the program fairly. Strive for consistency between supervisors and consensus among recipients relating to who gets rewarded and why.

- Have a few big winners, but also opportunities for all to compete and earn awards.

- Incorporate input from current recipients in defining meaningful rewards.

- Provide many reward options, a varied reward menu.

- Provide for public and peer recognition. Publicize.

- Make the reward itself, and/or its presentation, memorable (even fun!).

- Be timely. Confirm the achievement as soon as possible.

- Do not cheapen awards by overuse.

- Get top management commitment and enthusiasm.
"Not enough managers are willing to stop by and say, 'you're doing a good job'." ... NPS regional finance officer

"I don't think supervisors should be shy ... They should say 'you've done such a great job, what can we do for you?" ... NPS personnel specialist

CHAPTER 4

DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

- Where to focus efforts at improving rewards and recognition.
- How the direct supervisor's commitment is pivotal.
- How management can support supervisors.
TARGETS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Park Service managers and supervisors can take steps in their own parks and work units to improve rewards and recognition. Here are five places to focus efforts. (Specific suggestions related to each are found in the Resource Sections.)

- **More effectively utilize the formal Incentive Awards Program.** Starting with the awards framework we have, can we improve award credibility and significance to recipients? (See Resource Section A.)

- **Supplement the official program with other forms of special recognition.** Can we nominate employees for additional honors and awards? (See Resource Section B.)

- **Use all manner of informal recognition on a day-to-day basis.** What can we provide that is as one Park Service manager suggested "immediate, and involves no cash and no paperwork?" (See Resource Section C.)

- **Build into the operation more rewards that serve as incentives for future performance.** What kinds of rewards motivate and enable continued performance in our operation? (See Resource Section D.)

- **Increase awards program visibility.** Can we "leverage" additional recognition for outstanding performers? Can we increase everyone's understanding of our awards program? (See Resource Section E.)

Relating to all of the above, parks and work units need to build consistency between supervisors and consensus between employees on these key points:

- What kinds of accomplishments merit recognition?
- What kinds of awards (and how big) can be earned at different levels of accomplishment?
- How is the awards selection made?
- What levels and kinds of publicity are appropriate?
- What kinds of presentations are fitting?

AGENDA FOR SUPERVISORS

The direct supervisor's knowledge, commitment, and creativity may be the single most important factor in
successful rewards and recognition. If you are a supervisor, you can support unit or parkwide improvement efforts with your own action agenda.

- **Begin by acknowledging the impact that you, as a supervisor, have on others.** You can use positive reinforcement to achieve desired results and behavior.

- **Give priority to rewarding and recognizing staff,** setting aside a small bit of time on a regular basis for this purpose.

- **Look around you for opportunities to reinforce good work and the positive self-perceptions of your staff,** considering each person and their needs and achievements individually. Find something to reward and do it in an appropriate way. (Use the checklist, "Cashing in on Nonmonetary Recognition Ideas" to spur your thinking.)

- **Learn to think of rewards and recognition in two stages.** In addition to the more formal cash or honor award that an achievement may warrant, find a way to reinforce achievements immediately. Some organizations have developed special "recognition notes," bearing the company logo or insignia. These custom-tailored thank you notes spur supervisors to take a minute to let employees know in writing that their work on a particular project did not go unnoticed. (See "NPS Resources" for Park Service notes.) In some organizations, top managers make a point of regularly picking up the phone to personally cheer staff on and celebrate achievement.

- **Involve everyone, as potential reward recipients, in examining the existing use of incentives, rewards and recognition.** The Federal Personnel Manual encourages all supervisors to work with their staffs to design a meaningful program of rewards that sustains motivation. Prior to soliciting views of employees contact your Labor Relations Specialist to find out about any union obligations. Show that you welcome new ideas. Discuss with staff: What is outstanding achievement? How might we measure it? If the official program does not motivate employees, what kinds of rewards would meet their needs and expectations?

- **Understand the wide and effective range of incentives that you have to offer.** An incentive is anything that motivates a particular employee, and can include: encouragement, access to higher levels, the excitement and responsibility of management, or being able to run with a new idea.

- **Acknowledge that effective reinforcement need not only**
come from you. Other equally important sources of feedback exist. Try to configure work so that employees get more direct feedback from:

- peers
- "clients" or "customers" -- all those who benefit or utilize the employee's products or services, whether inside or outside the organization (e.g. park visitors, concessioners permittees, other NPS staff, etc.)
- objective sources of performance information (e.g. statistical reports, performance measures, etc.). Let employees do their own analysis, draw their own conclusions, and follow up.

• **Lead by example.** Show that you value the special awards you present and believe they signify real achievement. Add your endorsement to rewards and recognition received by those around you.

**MANAGEMENT ROLE**

Management can support supervisors by setting a tone that people matter, and that achievement comes only through the efforts of people. As one Park Service manager said, "Recognition? It's a certain humanness we try to instill around here." Among management's most difficult tasks are convincing **all** supervisors that rewards and recognition are a worthy effort, setting a level of budget support, and stimulating parkwide interest and participation in improving rewards and recognition. All three tasks add up to demonstrating a commitment to employee recognition and a willingness to make improvements.

**CONVINCING SUPERVISORS**

- Encourage supervisors to utilize rewards and recognition by regularly calling it to their attention at staff meetings, and by holding them accountable through performance appraisals. Also, share current readings on incentives, rewards and recognition and encourage discussion among staff (see Resource Section G). Or have one or two individuals investigate how others reward, and discuss what can be applied to your own operation.

- **Assign staff to the awards program and clarify in their**
performance standards how much time and energy they should devote to the program. Encourage supervisors to consult them as the "in-house experts" on reward and recognition issues.

- **Ask pointed questions about the awards program.** (Are there improvements in progress and goals for the future? What trends and results are we seeing? Are management actions needed to support the program?)

### SETTING A LEVEL OF SUPPORT

- Consider designating funds "off the top" during the budget process for the awards program. This is one way to clarify your level of commitment.

- No matter how the program is budgeted, consider these basic questions.

  - How much is "enough" to spend on reward and recognition? (OPM suggests that agencies allocate 1% of base pay for awards.)
  - Within the intended budget, what is the most that can be done (remembering that simple, direct forms of recognition often have returns far greater than their modest cost)?

- For a cost-effective rewards system, emphasize appropriate recognition. There are many different and legitimate reasons for rewarding employees. No single form of reward or recognition could fit all of the following management purposes:

  - to recognize the individual who has made an extraordinary contribution, and is a "model" to others
  - to recognize the team, as a way of team-building
  - to recognize the individual as a human being, as a way of personalizing the work environment
  - to recognize all individuals who attain a certain objective or standard, raising overall performance

### STIMULATING PARKWIDE INTEREST

Here are some ways for getting more employees involved in rewards and recognition:

- **Objective third person.** Use an objective and perhaps outside individual to facilitate employee groups that
tackle such quesions as: What is positive about our work environment and how can we reinforce it? How can we begin to eliminate negative interactions?

• **Reward and recognition work group.** Invite interested employees and incentive awards coordinators to serve on short term in-park work groups which address on-site needs and concerns. (See *A Self Evaluation Guide* in Resource Chapter F, and the "targets for improvement" in this chapter to help chart an agenda.)

  * At Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, a work group will prepare draft guidelines to go out to all supervisors to help standardize awards (e.g. how they can be earned, what kinds can be used, and how big they should be.) Compliance with the guidelines will be voluntary.

• **Question and answer session.** Have top management meet with all employees in small groups, with awards program staff on hand to help field questions. Keep it informal and frank. Take note of concerns and suggestions.

• **Parkwide campaign.** Plan a short term campaign with slogan, posters, and stated purpose of building awareness about the role of incentives, rewards, and recognition. Incorporate a bit of celebration, too.

  • San Antonio Missions NHP developed a "MIRAS" program to call all staff's attention to the concept that "Motivation is affected by Incentives, so Recognize Achievements and Suggestions." "Miras" also means looking in Spanish, and so had the additional meaning "looking for ways to improve our work." The project began with a parkwide conference to get people thinking about productivity, incentives, and what they could do at their jobs. The program also included training and individual follow-up with supervisors.

• **On-going awards committee.** Invite membership on a rotating basis, on an awards committee. Members would meet periodically to deal broadly with reward and recognition issues. Why not use the "targets for improvement" in this chapter to focus committee activities?

**ALL EMPLOYEES HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY IN REWARDS AND RECOGNITION: TO GIVE FEEDBACK TO OTHERS; TO MAKE SURE THEY GET THE FEEDBACK THEY THEMSELVES NEED; TO WILLINGLY SHARE CREDIT FOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS; AND TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR BEST IDEAS FOR MAKING IMPROVEMENTS. WHEN IT COMES TO REWARDS AND RECOGNITION, EVERYONE'S SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION IS KEY.**
"There wasn't any way thank yous were enough any more . . . something more had to be done for this person to express the organization's gratitude. That's when I turned to the Incentive Awards Program." ... NPS district ranger

RESOURCE SECTION A

MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM

• How effective use of the Incentive Awards Program hinges on both the organization and the individual supervisor.

• What has and is being done governmentwide to improve the program.

• What Park Service managers and supervisors can do to insure that awards are given out objectively, to the deserving, and that all staff have opportunities to earn awards.
The Federal Incentive Awards Program is the cornerstone of formal rewards and recognition in the National Park Service. The program can provide substantial cash reward and visibility, and can become part of a permanent record that later affects career advancement. We need to make the program as fair and effective as possible.

**HOW THE I.A.P. WORKS**

The Incentive Awards Program was established in 1954 to encourage civilian employees to contribute to government efficiency and economy. Using the program, departments and agencies* can:

- recognize government employees with cash awards
- recognize government employees with honor awards
- recognize non-government employees with honor awards
- recognize employees for submitting suggestions that improve government service

The Office of Personnel Management urges departments and agencies to:

1) encourage all employees to share actively in improving government operations;
2) recognize and reward appropriately, promptly, and on the basis of merit ...

**OPM emphasizes the flexibility of the awards program and encourages its full use.** The Department of the Interior, like other departments and agencies, can:

- establish its own kinds and amounts of awards
- approve awards up to $10,000 **
- design awards programs to meet specific goals (e.g., productivity improvement, equal employment opportunity, energy conservation, safety)

* For purposes here, NPS is considered a bureau. The term "agencies" refers to independent agencies.

** Within the Department of the Interior, Bureau heads can approve awards up to and including $5,000. Within the Park Service, Regional Directors can approve award amounts up to and including $2,500.
• grant awards to employees at all levels based on
  performance or one time contribution
• develop incentive plans to provide cash rewards when
  production standards are met

OPM's requirements are simple. Departments and agencies must
delegate authority and responsibility for approving awards to
the lowest practical level, and minimize the documentation
required. But without support and follow-through at each
level of the organization, the program has little substance.
According to OPM's Manager's Handbook, departments and
agencies must also:

• use performance appraisals to consider sustained
  superior performance awards and Quality Step Increases
  for individuals
• use normal budget reviews to identify outstanding group
  efforts
• when recommending a supervisor for an award, consider
  whether that supervisor encourages suggestions and
  uses awards
• act promptly on employee suggestions and performance
  award recommendations (30 days for local cases, 60 days
  for those requiring higher approval, 90 days for those
  that go to national level)
• ensure that all employees have equal opportunity to earn
  awards
• consider incentive awards when qualifying and selecting
  employees for promotion
• justify awards in writing
• make sure there are funds available to pay the award

Authorities -- Chapter 45 of title 5, United States
Code, provides the authority for agencies to
establish and administer awards programs. In Part
451 of the Code of Federal Regulations, the Office of
Personnel Management lays out some basic regulations
for conducting the program and encourages agencies to
make maximum use of their authorities. Chapter 451
of the Federal Personnel Manual provides more
specific guidance on how to run awards programs.

The corresponding Department of the Interior Manual,
Chapter 451 sets forth additional restrictions and
ground rules that apply to all Interior agencies
including, for example, types of awards (both
monetary and non monetary), how to prepare and
process nominations and Department, Bureau, and
supervisor responsibilities. NPS Personnel
Management Letters provide clarification specific to
the Park Service.
FEDERAL UPDATE

In Fiscal Year 1983, first year measureable benefits from employee suggestions, inventions, and achievements beyond job requirements reached $1.3 billion.

- A total of 416,752 federal employees were recognized for contributions beyond job requirements.
- Generally, there was a proportionate number of awards to employees in major grade groups (except for wage grades who were underrepresented).
- Cash awards totalled 168.4 million dollars, or .27% of civilian payroll costs.
- For every dollar paid in awards, the Government realizes benefits of about $7.90.

GAO FINDINGS

Despite the Incentive Awards Program's benefits to government, the already mentioned 1979 GAO report to Congress (Does the Federal Incentive Awards Program Improve Productivity?) targeted many areas for improvement. When GAO reviewed how the program worked for 13 representative federal activities in 9 different agencies, it found that:

- Most managers were not using awards to increase productivity. Few agencies had even asked, "What will motivate employees to greater performance?"

- Many supervisors were not using performance criteria to identify award recipients, but to justify awards given. In most agencies, employees were never told what predetermined performance level made them eligible for an award. Thus many supervisors believed they used the awards system to motivate, but few employees agreed.

- Awards were not given out consistently either within or between agencies. In some situations the net impact of awards on morale was negative.

- Quality Step Increases were too often substituted for incentive awards, without regard to their more stringent requirements.

- Where award processing was slow, it was usually because many approvals were being required. Since GAO also found that awards should be given within 30 days of the achievement for maximum reinforcement of performance,
the case for delegating down is strong.

Many of the Incentive Awards Program's most serious flaws were addressed by the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act, the revised Incentive Awards Regulations (5 CFR 451, effective 10/12/79), and the more extensive OPM guidance which followed (PPM 451, approved April 1980). Among the key changes made were: Streamlined documentation, delegation of authority to the lowest practical level, larger award amounts, the link to performance appraisals, and sustained superior performance awards as a percentage of base salary. But as OPM emphasizes, when it comes to personnel matters, legislative approaches provide only the framework for change. Real improvements will have to come at the organizational and supervisory level.

WHAT'S BEING DONE

In recent years, many departments and agencies have begun to make improvements in their Incentive Awards Programs. The examples include:

- **Using awards to support goals and objectives.** The Veterans Administration uses awards in support of volunteer services, communications with the public, youth programs, and outstanding management achievement.

- **Designating 1% of payroll.** The Water Resource Council budgets OPM's recommended 1% of payroll costs for awards.

- **Sharing royalties.** The National Technical Information Service and the Department of Commerce developed a unique royalty sharing program for federal inventors to encourage disclosure of promising inventions.

- **Giving cash bonuses.** The Federal Home Loan Bank Board gives quarterly bonuses to employee groups who meet specified conditions relating to processing of invoices.

WHAT'S AHEAD

Among the trends evident governmentwide are the following:

- **Even stronger ties between performance and award.** After many months of intense negotiation between OPM and Congress, major legislative changes were approved, affecting both mid level managers covered by the Merit Pay system (now PMRS) and those in the Senior Executive Service. This step sets the stage for moving the rest of the
federal white collar workforce toward pay-for-performance.

- **Increased emphasis on awards of all types.** In every incentive award category, the number of employees recognized increased in Fiscal Year 1983 over the previous fiscal year. Many departments and agencies, as well as the current administration, are also placing increased emphasis on prestigious honorary awards.

- **Increased pressures on federal managers.** Incentive Awards Program responsibilities will go up as the push to delegate down continues. Tighter budgets will force the question, "How well are we using our reward and recognition dollars?"

**NPS UPDATE**

Over 15,323 people were employed by NPS at the end of Fiscal Year 1984. During FY 84, a total 2,064 awards were granted, involving 2,833 employees, and paying out $985,306, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF AWARD</th>
<th>NUMBER GRANTED</th>
<th>AMOUNT PAID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monetary Recognition for Individuals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Sustained Superior Performance</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>$542,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Special Act or Service</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>$377,739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Awards</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>$51,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honorary Recognition</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Monetary Recognition (special commendations)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestion Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Monetary Recognition</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>$13,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Non-Monetary Recognition</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>2064</strong></td>
<td><strong>$985,306</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These numbers mean that about one out of every five Park Service employees was awarded in some way, which is on par with current governmentwide estimates and double the historical rate for government employees. When it comes to the suggestion program, Park Service had a little under one adopted suggestion per 100 employees, compared to the governmentwide average of about 1.5 per hundred. In FY 84, 2.2% of NPS employees submitted suggestions, well over the Department rate of 1.4% but under the governmentwide rate of 6.4%.

Trends -- Comparing FY 84 to FY 82 figures, the number of awards for sustained superior performance has increased 176%. Over the same period, the number of awards for special act or service has increased 62%. In terms of dollars, the service spent three times more on the above two programs in FY 84 than in FY 82.

Quality Step Increases were also up in FY 84 -- by 79% over FY 82 figures. Group awards have remained about the same, while suggestion awards have declined by about 11% since FY 82.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

The above numbers show a growing Incentive Awards Program, increasingly used by Park Service managers and supervisors. While this is good, we know there is room for improvement. One way to assure a high level of employee confidence in the program and wise expenditure of award monies, is to address employee concerns and get their thoughts on improving the program.

Here are some areas to pay particular attention to:

- **Speedy processing.** Don't let long waits for awards diminish their impact or cause the program to be viewed as slow and cumbersome. Here are some suggestions that employees have offered for speeding things up: Cross train staff to help clear up any backlogs; send postcards to inform the originators of awards nominations of where the award stands if approvals are overdue; allow co-workers to help draft nominations if supervisors are pressed for time; delegate more authority to the park level; and have awards staff do more "idea sharing."
• **Equal access.** Make sure *everyone* has the same encouragement to excel and the same access to awards. As some employees have suggested, we need to look around and see which segments of the workforce are underrepresented and ask, "Is the supervisor's understanding of the Awards Program a factor?"

• **Verifying accomplishment.** Some supervisors find it difficult to determine what is "above and beyond the job," let alone its dollar value. Remind everyone that employees can be rewarded "for doing their job" if their contribution is substantially above what can normally be expected. This is where performance standards come in. Without a strong performance appraisal process to back the awards program, its link to true accomplishment will be in doubt.

• **Impact on non-awarded employees.** To prevent people from being demotivated by seeing others awarded is a tough problem. Depending on the source of frustration, solutions might range from: making sure award amounts are in line with what others are receiving for comparable achievements; utilizing team awards wherever there is team effort; verbally crediting supervisors and co-workers when awards are presented; and making sure everyone knows how they, too, can earn an award.

**KEY PARKWIDE ACTIONS**

• **Tie awards to your goals and objectives.** Use awards to support your key objectives, whether they be related to resource management and visitor service goals, or such specifics as increased volunteerism, improved staff communications, or other.

• **Support all supervisors in using the Incentive Awards Program, as the only way to insure equal access to awards.** Remove any barriers that make the nomination process intimidating. Get assistance for supervisors in articulating justifications. Coach them in writing performance standards that stretch employees and really describe the additional attributes of outstanding performance. Assist supervisors to use Incentive Awards in ways that further their program goals and truly motivate employees.

• **Discuss the program with all employees.** Keep them informed by sharing annual reports and analyses. Be open to new ideas and suggestions for improvement. Make sure everyone knows how the Incentive Awards Program works, and how they can participate.
• **Evaluate and set goals for improvement.** Periodically evaluate how the Incentive Awards Program is working from a variety of standpoints, using A Self Evaluation Guide in Resource Section F or the more detailed list of evaluation questions found in FPM 451. Compare how you stand, in terms of numbers of awards given, against the Park Service overall. Set goals for improvement. Examples of goals might include: more awards in certain divisions, improved paperwork submitted by supervisors, and greater parkwide awareness.

**IMPROVING CASH AWARDS**

• **Work to develop parkwide consistency on how and when cash awards will be used.** Cash awards, in particular, can become the source of resentment if how award monies are spread is not understood or seems arbitrary.

• NPS has currently chosen not to implement "productivity based incentive systems" where regular cash awards are given for exceeding production standards. (These systems have worked well for the Departments of the Navy, Commerce and Treasury, and are permitted both under the existing Federal Incentive Awards authorities and D.O.I. regulations.) To reward productivity with a cash award parks can:

  1) Use special act or service awards, and estimate the tangible and intangible benefits that resulted from the increased productivity (awards may be as much as 10% of benefits. See established award scales.)

  2) Use unit awards, both cash and honorary, to reward work groups who have increased productivity.

**IMPROVING HONOR AWARDS**

• **Look for ways to make honorary awards more broadly available to all employees.** An example: Criteria for the D.O.I. Superior Service Award are not as stringent as for other honorary awards, and yet the award is underutilized.

• **Find ways to make officially sponsored non-monetary recognition (commendation letters, certificates, etc.) accessible to all.** As one employee said upon receiving a letter of appreciation signed by the Secretary of the Interior, "To tell you the truth, I was thrilled." The Forest Service, as an example, uses a special Certificate...
of Appreciation to express appreciation for suggestions and achievements that do not merit a cash award, as well as for service on special departmental or agency committees.

- As an organization, we might consider additional honorary awards tailored to our activities and recognition needs. The Forest Service, for example, presents an honorary Smoke Jumper Award for employees completing 50 firefighting parachute jumps.

**IMPROVING THE SUGGESTION PROGRAM**

- Some departments and agencies have striking rates of participation (Air Force 16%, Army 11%) and cause us to ask, "How can we increase participation in our own program?" **Creative promotion of the program is key.** See Resource Section E for ideas.

- Fast action on suggestions received builds program credibility and participation. **Take steps to reduce processing time:** develop an evaluator's checklist; recognize evaluators' performance with awards; set maximum processing time; and begin reporting current processing time by division.

- Try prompting suggestions in small group settings such as Quality Circles. To receive an award, suggestions would still need to be documented and submitted for evaluation.

- Develop some rules of thumb for drafting suggestions. As one park found, the result is likely to be higher quality suggestions.

**SPEAKING TO SUPERVISORS**

- Take time to improve your own understanding of how awards are processed. You can speed processing, assure greater consistency servicewide, and assure your staff are getting the recognition they deserve. Did you know that ... while an award recommendation is normally made by an employee's supervisor, it can be made by others (however, if made by others, they should always check with the employee's supervisor to see if there are any objections)? ... getting an award for a one-time special act or service doesn't preclude nomination for an award for sustained superior performance if that is also warranted? (See the Incentive Awards Program At-A-Glance chart in Resource Section F for hints on submitting nominations.)
• Don't rely on formal awards alone. Show appreciation immediately and in other ways for a job well done.

• Use team awards where there is a large degree of job interdependence. Most people take pride in being part of a winning team and some will actually work harder for this kind of recognition. But do highlight each individual's contribution to the team effort when writing up the nomination.

• Keep on hand and in one place information on your employees and their accomplishments, both as a team and individually. This includes completed reports, newspaper write-ups, "before and after" on-site photos, complimentary letters from the public or from other park professionals, and anything else that may help in writing up award nominations.
"Last year I received the Quad Council Award for Collateral Duty with the Disabled, and it is the most meaningful award that I've ever received. Only one was given and 300 people could have gotten it." ... NPS personnel specialist

RESOURCE SECTION B

OTHER OPTIONS FOR SPECIAL RECOGNITION

- How external awards fit into the reward and recognition spectrum.

- How to create successful in-park special awards programs.
Managers and supervisors can provide employees with an additional measure of special or formalized recognition, but should first get the advice of their Incentive Awards Coordinator. Ask about ways to:

- Utilize "structured" outside awards
- Seek out other external awards
- Create in-park or region-wide special awards

"STRUCTURED" OUTSIDE AWARDS

It is Departmental policy to endorse nominations for outside awards submitted by bureaus and offices (370 DM 451, Appendix 3, June 28, 1984). These outside awards are sponsored by non-federal organizations and are competitive throughout the Federal Government. They are sometimes called "structured" or "recognized" outside awards, because nominations first undergo Bureau review and then are submitted to the Interior Incentive Awards Committee.

The Department of Interior's current "Outside Awards Planning Guide" lists 23 such awards, and is available through Incentive Awards coordinators. Most of the awards are honorary; some include cash. Incentive Awards staff can also provide information on additional awards available to employees working in specialized fields and on awards sponsored by regional organizations of federal employees (e.g., Federal Executive Boards).

Structured awards have individual deadlines for submission of nominations to the Washington office, with submissions due to regional offices prior to that date. While these awards do involve a degree of paperwork and delay, many recipients feel especially honored to be selected by a respected panel of professionals outside their own agency.

Awards exist for these and other employee contributions:

- scientific achievements
- courtesy in dealing with the public
- exceptional performance in spite of disabling factors
- achievements in design, graphic design, landscape architecture
- contributions to fire prevention and safety
- contributions to personnel management
- contributions to training design and development
- outstanding government publications
OTHER EXTERNAL AWARDS

There are many other awards for which NPS staff are eligible. Some are searching for qualified nominees, and many are flexible about who can submit nominations. Because some awards have an eligible pool of nominees far broader than the Federal Government, their receipt may be particularly meaningful.

A note of caution: Park Service employees should not solicit or accept awards where there is even an appearance of conflict of interest or of double payment for work. Many outside awards are given for praiseworthy purposes (e.g., encourage professional excellence, show appreciation for local community involvement, etc.), but if in doubt about the legitimacy of a particular award, contact your personnel office or ethics counselor (preferably before a nomination has been submitted.) This is particularly important where money or gifts are involved.

In the past, Park Service employees have received awards sponsored by:

- the National Parks and Conservation Association
- cooperating associations
- professional organizations
- various other organizations involved in public purposes

National Parks and Conservation Association-sponsored awards. The NPCA, in cooperation with the Park Service, recognizes outstanding achievements through five separate awards. Each of these awards has its own field of eligibility and deadline for submission of nominations. Information on these awards is available through the NPCA Office, 1701 18th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20009, phone (202) 265-2717. Briefly the awards are as follows:

- Freeman Tilden Award, for outstanding contributions to interpretation.
- Steven Mather Award, honoring contributions in natural resources.
- Holland-Utley Award, newly established to honor contributions in cultural resources.
- Marjorie Stoneman Douglas Award, for citizen activism.
- Conservationist of the Year, usually presented to a political figure.
Cooperating association-sponsored awards. An example: The Southwest Parks and Monuments Association recognizes outstanding contributions to scientific research in national parks and monuments in the southwest with its Emil W. Haury Award. Recipients can include but are not limited to NPS employees.

Professional organization-sponsored awards. Park Service employees have a variety of professional affiliations. Many may be eligible for rewards given by professional and trade associations for excellence in their field. The journals and newsletters of these organizations often highlight award recipients and provide details on award nominations. Reinforcing professional identification in this way is a real boost for most staff.

* The American Society of Landscape Architects sponsors a national awards program for outstanding planning and design. One 1984 award went to an employee at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, whose work exemplified public and private sector cooperation in the development of national parks.

Awards from other organizations involved in public purposes. An example: The Ohio Historical Preservation Office presented a Preservation Merit Award to the William Howard Taft NHS for the site's fundraising efforts utilizing a Gifts Catalog.

CREATING SPECIAL AWARDS

To what extent should Park Service managers encourage the creation of awards specific to a park or region? There are two sides to this question. On the positive, such awards can make special recognition more broadly available to employees at all grade levels. In-park awards can also be custom tailored to reflect a particular park's mission, history, and goals for the future. Examples of in-park awards include: Park Person of the Quarter, Most Valuable Employee of the Year, Regional Office Employee Best Serving Our Park, Safety Employee of the Year. Such awards can be well received as this example shows:

* At Harpers Ferry Center, co-workers nominate a person for achievements not ordinarily recognized through the Incentive Award Program (e.g., for work that is arduous, thankless in nature, "heroic deeds"). The nomination can be humorous but not derogatory, and it must relate to actual achievements. A committee selects a winner who is honored at an awards ceremony with an "Atta
Person" certificate and a special carving which the person gets to display for 6 months, until the next award is given. As the committee chairperson reports, "The presentation of this award is the highlight of our awards ceremony. We all wait for this one."

On the negative, special in-park awards can be the target of resentment. As one manager said, "I just had to look at their faces to know we had one winner and 59 losers."

Consider this example:

* In one NPS unit, a "Ranger of the Month" award was discontinued in the face of staff cynicism and outright criticism. The manager involved speculated that lack of staff input in the design of the program, as well as other pre-existing issues, caused the award to be viewed as superficial and contributed to its failure.

RULES OF THUMB FOR IN-PARK AWARDS

• Use them to supplement, not supplant the more formal Incentive Awards Program.
• Don't restrict eligibility to a single group of employees, unless comparable awards are available to others. (For example, parks might develop a series of "superintendent's awards" with one to be given in each division.)
• As with all special awards, don't do it too frequently. As Ben Johnson said, "He who praises all men praises no one!"
• Design an eye-catching nomination form, if employees are being invited to submit nominations. Create interest in other ways, too.
• Using low cost materials, try to create something special to present to the winner, whether a modified mug, colorful banner, special emblem, T-shirt, baseball cap or patch, or humorous poem. Avoid bulk purchases of discount award items. Strive to present something personalized and exclusive, that will serve as a distinctive reminder.
• Let it be an occasion for all to celebrate. One park bakes an arrowhead shaped cake for such occasions.
• Particularly when an award has just been established, make sure it is given to individuals respected by their peers. Otherwise, it may never have credibility.
• Don't rely on awards alone to solve management problems.
Managers can get assistance with starting up and running special awards programs from these sources:

- **Peer committees.** Consider peer selection of award recipients, perhaps by forming a committee.

- **Local business community.** Local businesses (including concessioners) can help sponsor an awards program by assisting with publicity and the award presentation, and perhaps even by donating an award of nominal value.

- **Cooperating associations.** Ask cooperating associations how they might help in honoring outstanding employees, particularly in relation to interpretive activities.

- **Regional and park Incentive Awards Coordinators.** They can help define selection criteria and otherwise assist efforts. (Get their advice regarding any potential conflict of interest **before** initiating a new award.)

Look for other ways to extend the opportunities for special recognition:

- **Hold inhouse ceremonies** to honor employees selected as finalists in external awards programs.

- **Push for the establishment of awards within ranger, interpretive, and any other professional associations of which you or your staff are members.**

- **Present tastefully designed retirement plaques to all retirees serving a minimum time with NPS, as a special way of saying thanks.** (A few regions do this already.) Just don't wait until people retire to honor them!
"The most meaningful recognition for me comes from within this park, seeing for myself and hearing from others that what I contribute here is valuable." ... NPS personnel specialist

"I get so excited when I see good work, that I have to get on the radio right away and let them know." ... NPS maintenance supervisor

RESOURCE SECTION C

INFORMAL AND EVERYDAY RECOGNITION

- Why people need both formal and informal recognition.
- How to tailor informal recognition to the individual recipient's expectations and preferences.
- What kinds of informal recognition employees value most.
MPS supervisors and managers can recognize employees in ways that are "immediate and involve no cash and no paperwork." All it takes is creativity and initiative.

In their own work units, supervisors can use all manner of informal and nonmonetary recognition. In fact, the Federal Personnel Manual Chapter 451, Subchapter 7: Non-Monetary Recognition) states that, "Supervisors should consider what types of recognition they and others have used most effectively, and tailor their incentives program to meet specific conditions and needs in their organization." The FPM urges supervisors and employees to work together to design incentives that motivate and sustain high levels of accomplishment. The FPM encourages:

- citations
- letters of recommendation or appreciation
- certificates
- special emblems or badges
- pictures taken with key officials
- publicizing employee achievements in the organization's house bulletin or newsletter
- attendance at a meeting with the boss, opportunities to attend a staff meeting, conference or training program

WHY IT'S ESSENTIAL

People need both formal and informal recognition. Without informal recognition along the way, few employees become outstanding performers who merit special recognition. Informal recognition allows for:

- **Personalized recognition.** It's a way to "treat everyone differently simultaneously," to design the kind of recognition that best suits the individual.

- **Low cost/high return.** The returns are often far greater than the minimal cost.

- **Immediate and frequent feedback.** Because they can be initiated on the spot, the moment a job is completed, their reinforcement value may be greater than that of formal awards. Also, people simply get more frequent information on how to improve their performance. The value of daily feedback cannot be overstated.

- **Broad participation.** More people can get into the act of recognizing and being recognized.
FRONLINE PERSPECTIVES
NPS employees themselves place a high value on informal recognition, as these comments show:

"My motivation is not for money, but for a thank you, and for continued career success, new opportunities, new responsibilities." ... ranger

"There's no replacement for one-to-one recognition of supervisor-to-employee, and of peer-to-peer, for a job well done." ... superintendent

"I like knowing -- and being told -- I do a good job. It's an everyday thing." ... secretary

"The best recognition? A public and honest compliment. A follow-up note is nice, too." ... ranger

WHAT’S BEING DONE

Many Park Service managers and supervisors have settled on favorite ideas for informal recognition. Here are just a few. (For additional suggestions, see the checklist Cashing in on Non-Monetary Recognition in Resource Section F.)

- Bake individual birthday cakes for the employees you supervise.
- Brew cappuccino on cold mornings to get trail crews off to a good start.
- Buy special note cards to convey your written thanks.
- Get rides for staff on Navy helicopters to see less accessible park areas.
- "Airlift" ice cream and other hard-to-obtain treats to hardworking staff working in remote assignments.
- Send employees to conferences related to their area of accomplishment.

Taking practical steps to keep people committed and producing is a key part of any manager's job. Yet some Park Service managers may feel they lack the dollars and flexibility to provide the "perks" that may be available in other
organizations. If we concentrate on what we can provide we will find many options. As one manager advises, "Just keep it positive. Rewards and recognition need not always be substantial, just a way of letting people know what the organization wants."

Many other organizations are encouraging managers to say thank you often and in creative ways. Here are some of their ideas.

- IBM sends letters of commendation for just about everything its people accomplish. Mervins (a department store) sends specially designed thank you notes to employees and even sets a quota for its managers of ten notes per month.

- On opening any MacIntosh computer, a new owner will find the signatures of all Apple employees who had a part in building it.

- North American Tool and Die, gives on-the-spot "Superperson" awards, accompanied by $50 in cash, whenever it observes someone taking an extra step for the company.

- 3M (makers of Scotch Tape) allows its good performers to spend up to 15% of their time at completely non-directed work. They can follow up on whatever interests them, because the company believes it will have long term payoff.

- In Scottsdale, Arizona, the Department of Parks and Recreation has an informal "Grace under Pressure" award. Anyone can present a rose, usually secretively, to a co-worker who has shown his or her mettle in the face of a difficult situation.

- The Recreation Division of the City of San Luis Obispo holds barbeques. Criteria for attending are set up in advance, and in such a way that everyone (with a little effort) can meet them. Management gets objectives accomplished and staff get a pat on the back.

# WHAT SUPERVISORS CAN DO

Among the most valued (and least costly) forms of recognition are the following:

- a sensitivity to individual preferences
- support for career aspirations
- genuine respect for employees and their contributions
• finding ways to inject fun into the workplace

RECOGNIZING INDIVIDUAL PREFERENCES

Employees vary in the kinds of informal recognition and "personal perks" they expect and value. Most people appreciate:

- honest and public compliments
- all manner of written notes
- flexible work hours
- an upgraded or more functional work environment
- training/cross-training
- special assignments/unique opportunities/variety
- some acknowledgement of birthdays and personal transitions
- celebration of work team milestones

Additionally, people involved outdoors in backbreaking labor may appreciate:

- an occasional breather from routine or physically stressful work
- an extra pair of hands to pitch in and complete the job
- hearing the positive comments of visitors
- good natured competition between work teams
- occasional cookouts at a cleaned-up or rehabilitated site
- being involved in researching and selecting tools, equipment and materials
- being assigned projects where they can see accomplishment
- a photographic record of work team accomplishments

Individuals involved in clerical work often value:

- being regarded as an equal member of the group and being asked their opinions and thoughts on substantive matters
- assignments that broaden their career horizons (e.g., learning to write news releases, training on new equipment)

Almost any staff who are office bound will appreciate opportunities to see how their work is utilized, where it goes, who it benefits (for example, through special assignments in the field, meeting counterparts in other offices).

It pays to occasionally ask people how you can show your appreciation. One Park Service supervisor asked her interpretative staff, "What have I done to reward you recently?" Here are a few things they remembered: taking time to sit down and verbally share her appreciation; an Easter Lily
with a note of thanks; explaining at staff meetings exactly what individuals had accomplished; special opportunities, such as meeting the Director.

**Be on the lookout for opportunities to recognize staff in unique and highly appropriate ways.** An example: One secretary, who consistently excels in her work with a regional office of operations evaluation, was herself appointed as a fullfledged member on a park evaluation team.

**Finally, don't neglect opportunities for "indirect recognition."** Let an employee's co-workers and associates hear about good work. The word will get back to the employee and may be doubly appreciated. Some parks have sent letters to spouses and home town newspapers detailing accomplishments.

**THE CAREER ADVANCEMENT CONNECTION**

Park service employees repeatedly confirmed the value they place on the following:

- Transferring positive feelings about employees to higher-ups who might hire them in the future.
- Helping employees to find new opportunities, be confident of their capabilities, and better position themselves for advancement with specific training and experience (e.g., internships, scholarships).
- Discussing employee career goals and timetables, special interest and concerns, and how they dovetail with the work unit's agenda.
- Dealing with the barriers that hinder employee performance, whether tools, training, interpersonal relations or other.
- Finding ways to boost employee visibility and status. Crediting their contributions verbally and in writing.

**THE NEED TO FEEL RESPECTED**

Everyone has a need to feel respected. One major study of American workers (Supervision in the 80's: Trends in Corporate America, Opinion Research Corporation, 1984) found that being treated with respect was highly valued by managers, supervisors, professionals, clerical and hourly employees alike. Only pay and advancement were rated higher overall.
Here is how many employees might describe being treated with respect on the job. It means:

- hearing how much their contribution is valued, and just where they fit into the bigger picture.
- having others see their strengths, as well as weaknesses, and getting the kind of feedback that really helps improve performance.
- being kept informed, involved, and "wired in".
- having their opinions heard and suggestions valued.
- not being left in the shadows, but having credit, authority and new opportunities passed along to them.

Perhaps no one has said it better than this District Ranger, "You must always remember that you are dealing with an adult who is working at his or her job the same way that you are at yours, wants just as badly to succeed, needs the same support and feedback you need, and deserves to get those things."

ABOUT SPONTANEOUS AWARDS

For some supervisors, giving spontaneous awards comes naturally. These awards are non-competitive and given as called for, rather than on schedule or as part of a regular awards program. Always customized, sometimes humorous, they also convey real appreciation. And, they add a sense of fun to the workplace. Note these NPS examples:

- At LBJ National Historical Park, a supervising interpreter gave a "Jumping in with Both Feet Award", complete with humorous and descriptive verse, detailing the recipient's accomplishments. The individual was being recognized for fearlessly taking on a new and unknown assignment.

- At Point Reyes National Seashore, staff have been awarded the "Fickle Finger of Fate" award. A certificate details occasional "bloopers" made on the job, and gives everyone a chance to laugh together. It's kept light-hearted.
"Keep the projects coming and the money coming." ... NPS trail supervisor

"The best reward? Being put somewhere where I can be effective." ... NPS site manager

RESOURCE SECTION D

INVESTMENT-CENTERED REWARDS

- Why the best reward is sometimes more work.
- How supervisors and managers can take steps to support individual initiative.
One of the best rewards may simply be more work—access to challenging problems and the authority, staff and budget to solve them. These kinds of rewards are considered investment-centered, rather than pay-off centered.

Particularly in the public sector, there may be little incentive to improve service or reduce costs. Cost-conscious managers are often no more likely than others to get additional resources, and may even be penalized with staff reductions. In this kind of environment, the reward and recognition system is not doing its intended job of improving productivity.

Some public agencies are working hard to eliminate demotivators inherent in the budget process. Note these examples:

- IRS has used a technique called profit sharing with regional managers. If the manager improves his or her organization's productivity over a period of a year, he or she is given back resources equal to half the annual savings, to be used as deemed appropriate.

- The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services in Anaheim, California may soon implement a "Revolving Opportunity Fund" which would allow the Recreation Division to retain a portion of the dollars accumulated through revenue generation and cost savings. The money would be appropriated the following year as a "carrot" that encourages managers to plan new and promising projects.

Instead of providing cash, certificates, or special honors, investment-centered rewards provide individuals with continued opportunities to learn, participate, and feel successful. Like promotions, investment-centered rewards provide individuals with a sense of career growth and progress, and communicate a vote of confidence. For the organization, they improve management "bench strength" and get needed work done.

How can first line supervisors apply the investment-centered rewards concept in their work units? All supervisors can do the following:

- Give people as much authority and responsibility as possible, within the bounds of their position description.
- Support participation on task forces, and other projects that expand employee contacts and visibility.
- Allow employees to gain management experience and be in the limelight (through acting assignments, allowing them to represent you at meetings or before
the press, etc.)
- allow staff to follow through on their ideas and present their proposals to management.
- to the extent possible, allocate budget in a way that supports performance.

As a manager, do you let people run with things that may not be your top priority? Investment-centered rewards imply a sensitivity to people's career aspirations and special interests. Managers need to find ways to combine what management wants to get done and what staff want to get done. They must be flexible enough to go after those of their objectives that allow them to utilize the strengths they have on board.

What if we don't have the budget to support employee effort and initiative with funds and resources? As one Park Service site manager expressed it, "Even if you don't have the dollars, let people know it needs to get done. They may surprise you and do it." Managers need to recognize, however, that budget crunch or not, committed employees can only go so long without seeing progress in their program areas before "burnout" sets in.

- One park set up interdivisional work teams to develop strategies for accomplishing backlogged natural resource projects. Work team members were allowed to spend a designated percent of their time on these projects. Natural resources staff were re-energized by management's attention. Other staff were recognized for their previously unutilized skills and expertise.

As one superintendent sums it up, "We should be looking for ways to support individual initiative in our organization."
"I would suggest a brief text and a picture to The Courier... I think the pictures are great. They add life, make the person a real person, and suggest that, maybe, you could do that, too." ... NPS district ranger

"The best way to give awards is by surprise, in a supportive environment with people who will appreciate the fact." ... NPS supervisor

RESOURCE SECTION E

PRESENTATION, PUBLICITY, AND PROGRAM PROMOTION

- How the award presentation can be made to enhance the award.

- How to provide publicity for award recipients.

- How to successfully promote an awards program.
To be effective, an awards program needs visibility. Low profile programs simply will not sustain a level of understanding, interest, and excitement. In fact, awards are said to have three basic ingredients: the makers of achievement, i.e. the doers of exceptional things; the bestowers of recognition; and the observers of recognition, to acknowledge the achievement.

PRESENTATION

One large, private sector study of rewards and recognition found that 84% of administrators surveyed agreed with the statement, "The way in which recognition is given is far more important than the tangible award itself."

WHEN A FORMALIZED PRESENTATION IS CALLED FOR, MOST PEOPLE WANT THE FOLLOWING:

- presentation in a personal and sincere manner by someone who knows them and their work
- a level of public ceremony that matches their contribution, neither too large nor too small
- the presence of their peer group
- emphasis on their specific job accomplishments, not length of service or personal traits
- accuracy in describing their accomplishments and career history
- some acknowledgment of the accomplishments of which they themselves are most proud

The above applies as much to cash awards and major honor awards as to the presentation of career service emblems denoting length of service. (In fact, for some individuals who may never be singled out for performance awards, receiving career service emblems is their only opportunity for formalized recognition.) Managers should do what they can to make every presentation a career highlight, not a reminder of how little a person is known and valued. Even when, due to the importance of the contribution, a top official is deemed the best person to present a specific award, the role of the direct supervisor is key. By their own enthusiasm and interest, supervisors add value to an award. They are also in the best position to understand recipient preferences, and can suggest ways to personalize the ceremony.
What about employees who say they want no part of public ceremonies? Supervisors must do their best to assess whether this is really the case. As one NPS employee noted, "When I received the award I just felt very embarrassed, but it was a good experience, a thrilling experience." Of course, no truly unwilling employee should be made to take part in a public ceremony. Here are additional suggestions for personalizing and improving awards presentations:

- Once an award is approved, don't delay in presenting it. If the check is held up, present the certificate anyway.

- The Superintendent at one park always credits the recipient's supervisor when presenting an award. Sometimes it is also appropriate to credit co-workers.

- One park presents recipients with a photo of themselves beside their completed project or engaged in the activity that brought them recognition, as a lasting visual reminder.

- Make the ceremony fun and an occasion to build team spirit. Some parks hold coffees, with special attention to refreshments. You might look for ways to link awards ceremonies with work unit milestones, or dates and events that have in-park or NPS-wide significance.

- Always, always speak to the value of the achievement.

PUBLICITY

As a Wall Street Journal editorial advises: "Publish everything positive you can find. Print is cheap. Its rewards are long lasting."

Publishing rewards and recognition maximizes the positive recognition they provide for employees. Even when formal awards are not forthcoming, the accomplishments of Park Service staff may be newsworthy. For many employees, such evidence of broader, public recognition will be clipped, shared, and treasured. Suggestions for supervisors include:

- Work through your park or unit's public affairs person to make information on accomplishments and awards available to appropriate media.

- Plan on preparing the write-up yourself, as the person...
best informed about the achievement.

- Personally arrange to have photos taken at the awards presentation. Use the most talented photographer you have available.

One useful concept here is the "Extent of Exposure Scale," developed by the Forest Service's Sandia Ranger District in Cibola National Forest, New Mexico. The scale is used primarily with the volunteer program, to seek a level of media exposure appropriate to the contribution. It can also serve as a source of ideas for gaining exposure for paid employees and as a basis for consistent treatment between employees. (Important to remember is that your perceived value of an accomplishment may be different than its news value which will affect the public recognition that will actually result.) As developed at Sandia, the scale is roughly illustrated by this list:

1) National Network television or radio news coverage
2) "Hour Magazine" style TV program
3) Weekly national news magazine
4) Major newspapers
5) Internal newsletter (service-wide, e.g., Courier)
6) General interest magazine (e.g., Sunset)
7) Local news broadcast
8) Local newspaper articles
9) Limited employee newsletter, administrative bulletins
10) Congratulations and bulletin board notices

As Sandia District Ranger Jerry Greer describes their use of the scale, "We might attempt to get national coverage for a volunteer who saved taxpayers $100,000 or did something of obviously high importance."

Some organizations purposefully design reward and recognition events for news value. Note these examples:

- Lyndon Baines Johnson NHP was able to get Mrs. Lyndon Baines Johnson to attend an in-park recognition ceremony.

- Using private sector donations, the City of San Francisco, California sends two "street cleaners of the year" to a week in Hawaii, all expenses paid.

**PROGRAM PROMOTION**

As the Federal Personnel Manual points out, "Promotion of the Incentive Awards Program is not merely a matter of
good will, friendly relations, a positive image, or public relations; it is an essential step in achieving the purposes of the law creating the program (FPM Supplement 451-1 Subchapter S3-2)." Whether the incentive is an honor, cash or non-cash award, we are encouraging employees to voluntarily contribute ideas and actions beyond normal job responsibilities. This takes a continuous effort to build awareness and solicit cooperation. The FPM offers this advice on promotion: don't start promotional efforts if you cannot follow through; utilize the variety of "clip art" available, always making a link with the message you want to convey; and share promotional successes with others.

As GAO pointed out in a 1978 study, suggestion programs in particular may benefit from improved promotion and more visible follow-up. Some of GAO's 1978 recommendations include: visible leadership, established goals for participation, prompt acknowledgement of suggestions, and recognizing and rewarding suggesters (GAO Report FPCD 78-73, Nov. 8, 1978, The Federal Employee Suggestion System -- Possibilities for Improvement). Here are some specific ways to promote suggestion award programs.

- IBM's highly successful P.I.E. (productivity improvement effort) program has as its immediate payoff a piece of pie. Quick reward stimulates participation and makes the base of winners very broad. The award need not be costly. Within the National Park Service, appropriated funds can be spent on suitable promotional items of nominal value.

- Two specific promotional ideas include: 1) setting up a suggestion box and giving it importance and visibility; and 2) having a quarterly promotional program. For example, the quarterly focus of the suggestion program could change from equipment and supplies, to staff time, to paperwork, and then to improved service to the public.

- One NPS employee suggested that all approved suggestions be published somewhere where they will be read and put to use by peers. (Possibilities: Trends, Grist, Design, Park Science, Nationwide Digest of Management Initiatives, Ranger Newsletter and, if ideas have government-wide applicability, OPM's Incentive Award Notes.)

- When adopted suggestions save money or improve services, these results should be made known to staff -- at staff meetings, through staff meeting notes and through occasional parkwide updates. For many people it is reward enough to see their ideas having impact. Some organizations use ad hoc groups to discuss how suggestions can be more broadly implemented.
• **Supervisors:** Don't wait for others to promote the program. Periodically review with your own staff how the suggestion program works and what kinds of ideas qualify. Remember, suggestions need not be new or original to be eligible, but they must directly increase economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of operations. And, they must be submitted in writing, so take a moment to encourage employees making verbal suggestions to get them on paper. While you should not make assignments to specific staff to come up with suggestions, do focus your staff on operational problems that need solving.

OPM has developed various promotional materials related to the employee suggestion program. Park awards staff should contact regional awards staff to find out what is currently available. Another potential source of promotional ideas and materials is the National Association of Suggestion Systems (NASS), 230 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1200, Chicago, Illinois, 60601, (312) 372-1770. (For a quick summary of ideas from other organizations, see The Power of Promotion in Resource Section F).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Think of promotion in the broad sense of promoting your people and their value to the organization, as well as the reward and recognition program per se. You might:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Explain at staff meetings</strong> what your staff has accomplished, mentioning individuals by name.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Circulate letters of appreciation</strong> your staff receive.</td>
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<td>• <strong>Ask the Superintendent to come by</strong> and view accomplishments in person.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Create a park &quot;honor roll&quot;</strong> and bulletin board to display the names of employees who have received awards, submitted suggestions, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Use an in-park press release format</strong> to announce all special awards given.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Route an annual summary</strong> of award recipients and their accomplishments, along with a statistical update on the awards program and its impact.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Keep a photo album</strong> of &quot;before and after&quot; pictures to visually illustrate progress made in site maintenance, trail construction, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Utilize awards with &quot;trophy&quot; value,</strong> i.e., nominal awards that people can display at their work stations.</td>
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</table>
"Management should do everything it can to make the awards process less intimidating." ... NPS personnel specialist

RESOURCE SECTION F

SUMMARY CHECKLISTS AND TABLES

- Chart 1: A Self Evaluation Guide
- Chart 2: The Incentive Awards Program At-A-Glance
- Chart 3: Cashing in on Non-Monetary Recognition
- Chart 4: The Power of Promotion
- Chart 5: Be Advised • Be Advised • Be Advised
## A Self Evaluation Guide: Questions About Your Use of Rewards and Recognition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does everyone understand how rewards and recognition shape performance?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do we emphasize both immediate, day-to-day feedback and a more formal awards program?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do we use rewards and recognition to support what is important to our park or work unit?</td>
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<td>Do we use rewards and recognition to stimulate productivity?</td>
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<td>Do we involve everyone in designing effective incentives?</td>
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<th>Link to Performance</th>
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<td>Are awards linked to performance in a clear and consistent way?</td>
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<td>Does everyone know how they can earn an award?</td>
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<td>Can people really influence their chances to receive an award?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do we clearly define and measure what is outstanding performance?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do all supervisors encourage employees to be outstanding performers, to strive for awards?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do we use management reviews to identify where work teams have met deadlines early, at less cost, or with superior results?</td>
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<tr>
<th>The Reward Menu</th>
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<tr>
<td>Do we utilize the full spectrum of awards (e.g., incentive awards, both cash and honorary, official forms of nonmonetary recognition, outside awards, special opportunities, etc.)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do we have a common understanding as to what kinds of accomplishments merit what kinds of rewards?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does everyone know how to utilize the Incentive Awards Program?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do employees at all grade levels have the opportunity to earn both cash and honorary awards?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do we give both major awards for extra special achievements, and lesser rewards for steps in the right direction?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Should we create in-park awards that reflect our unit's needs and character?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do we provide some official recognition for all employees (career service emblems, certificates to departing employees, retirement plaques)?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Presentation, Publicity and Promotion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Can presentations be made more timely?</td>
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<td>Are presentations sincere and do they involve the recipient's supervisor and peers?</td>
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<td>Do we provide various and appropriate levels of ceremony?</td>
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<td>Are presentations fun? Do they contribute to team spirit?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do we publicize awards and why they were given?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do people get periodic updates about how the awards program is working?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there designated awards program staff who are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and able to devote time to the program?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do we provide visibility and credit to all segments of the workforce?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the awards program meeting its objectives?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do we ask employees how well the awards program is working?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do we deal with employee concerns about the program?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do some segments of the workforce seem to get all the &quot;big&quot; awards, while others get few or none?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the program's strengths and weaknesses?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do we have goals for improvement?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Could we better spend our awards budget?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do we have top management's commitment and support?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**CHART 2**

**THE INCENTIVE AWARDS PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOGNITION</th>
<th>WHO IS ELIGIBLE?</th>
<th>NATURE OF CONTRIBUTION</th>
<th>REQUIREMENTS THAT MUST BE MET</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honor Awards (Federal, Non-Federal, Department, Agency or Bureau).</td>
<td>Federal employees -- individuals or groups, as specified in announcement.</td>
<td>Distinguished career or mission oriented achievements, or accomplishments in specific areas.</td>
<td>Those specified in announcements inviting nominations or in Department and Agency regulations.</td>
<td>Usually takes the form of a medal, plaque or certificate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Achievement Award – for Sustained Superior Performance.</td>
<td>All Federal employees except PMRS and SES -individuals only.*</td>
<td>Individual performance which exceeded normal requirements and was sustained over a significant period.</td>
<td>The employee's most recent performance appraisal must support the conclusion that overall performance substantially exceeded the fully satisfactory level and performance of all critical elements was at least fully satisfactory or the agency equivalent.</td>
<td>The amount normally relates to the employee's salary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Achievement Award – for Special Act or Service.</td>
<td>All Federal employees--individuals or groups.</td>
<td>Performance that has exceeded job requirements as a one-time occurrence (e.g., overcoming unusual difficulties on a particular project or assignment or exemplary or courageous handling of an emergency situation related to official employment).</td>
<td>Generally, measurable benefits to the Government must be at least $250 or have intangible benefits of comparable value.</td>
<td>Cash award from $25 to $35,000. The amount is in proportion to the benefits realized by the Government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Increase</td>
<td>Employees in the General Schedule (GS) --individuals only.</td>
<td>High quality performance, above that normally found in the type of position concerned, sustained over a period of service in the job upon which to base this conclusion.</td>
<td>The employee's recent performance appraisal must support the conclusion that overall performance substantially exceeded the fully satisfactory level and performance of all critical elements was at least fully satisfactory, or the equivalent. Performance must have been sustained at this level for a sufficient time that it is considered characteristic of the individual's performance. The employee must be expected to remain in the same position, or in a similar position at the same grade level for at least 60 days so that performance can be expected to continue at the same level.</td>
<td>An additional within-grade increase which indefinitely raises the employee's salary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For information on awards specifically available to SES employees, see the FPM.
**CHART 2 (CONTINUED)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOGNITION</th>
<th>WHO IS ELIGIBLE?</th>
<th>NATURE OF CONTRIBUTION</th>
<th>REQUIREMENTS THAT MUST BE MET</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suggestion Award</td>
<td>All Federal employees -- individuals or groups</td>
<td>An adopted suggestion, whether adopted as submitted or in part, that directly contributes to economy or efficiency, or directly increases effectiveness of Government operation.</td>
<td>The suggestion must be outside the suggester's job responsibilities or, if within them, so superior that it warrants special recognition and must not concern employees services or benefits, working condition, or housekeeping.</td>
<td>Cash award from $25 to $35,000. The amount is in proportion to the benefits realized by the Government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay for Performance</td>
<td>GS-13 -- 15 Supervisors and Managers (employees covered under Performance Management and Recognition System - PMRS).</td>
<td>Organizational and Individual performance.</td>
<td>The employee's current performance appraisal must support the conclusion that a merit pay increase or lump sum cash award is warranted.</td>
<td>Increase in salary within the established range.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lump sum cash award.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HINTS ON SUBMITTING AWARD NOMINATIONS**

**HOW?**

1. Evaluate employee performance against job performance standards and determine if it merits recognition.
2. Select appropriate form of recognition from the accompanying table.
3. Write up award recommendation.
4. Submit nomination (including completed form and required number of copies) for review and approval.*
5. Receive notification and present award.

* The form and number of copies required varies between types of awards, as does the kind of additional information that might be appropriate to the justification. Also, for some awards you need to provide a citation (excerpted from the justification) that can be signed, presented to the recipient, and perhaps read at the awards ceremony. See NPS PML 80-24 (AS1), dated December 24, 1980, and your own regional guidelines for the specifics on submitting nominations.

**WHO?**

Nomination should be prepared by the supervisor, in collaboration with previous supervisors, higher level managers, and all others who have first hand knowledge of the candidate's activities and accomplishments.

**ADVICE?**

- **Be brief.** Generally use no more than one page.
- **Be factual.** Use precise statements and performance measures that allow reviewing officials to see clearly that the award is merited. (Hints: Discuss the situation prior to or without employee's involvement. Describe pressures, risks, and obstacles. Describe extent of contacts necessary and at what levels to complete the achievement.)
- **Be objective.** Address job performance, not personality. (Hint: Don't use superlatives, just describe the achievements.)
- **Be thorough.** Identify all benefits to the Government, whenever possible. (Hint: Begin with benefits to immediate unit.)
### CHART 3

**CASHING IN ON NON-MONETARY RECOGNITION**

Today's Park Service managers are finding ways to complement the formal program with effective and creative non-monetary recognition ideas. What would your staff appreciate?

#### LETTERS OF COMMENDATION/VERBAL THANKS

- Give honest public compliments, followed by a note or memo to person's file.
- Send letters to spouses thanking them for putting up with the long hours staff person has worked.
- Send letter back to staff person's hometown newspaper, detailing their accomplishments.
- Take a photo of the person, project or achievement. Present it as a visual reminder of the accomplishment, along with a signed letter.
- Invite superintendent to swing by to view the maintenance operation, and follow up his/her visit with a letter saying "It's never looked this good before."
- Compile a book of letters for people retiring, asking friends and associates to express thoughts, appreciation and recall anecdotes.
- Print or post letters of appreciation from visiting public. Send a copy to responsible staff with your personal note of thanks attached.
- Immediately relate your excitement by phone or radio, whenever someone does a good job for you.
- Attach positive notes on all work done -- reports, proposals or other.

#### CERTIFICATES, PLAQUES, PINS, SPECIAL AND SPONTANEOUS AWARDS

- Find donors who can donate items of nominal value for in-park awards programs.
- Develop "employee of the month" (or quarter) programs. Present plaques and post pictures. (Examples: Most valuable employee, safety achievement, best suggester.)
- Develop a park safety award to emphasize the importance of safety. Present winner with a special hard hat and letter of commendation. Inscribe winner's name on a permanent plaque.
- Present or certificate to everyone who has worked for you, on departure, no matter how long or short their stay. Can be done parkwide or regionwide. Give a plaque to all retirees who have worked a minimum of five years with NPS.
- Have an "Employee of the Year" award with inscribed plaque, arrowhead shaped cake and celebration.
- Present a cartoon. (One NPS supervisor treasures the drawing of himself as a pelican his staff presented.)
- Develop humorous awards such as a "Fickle Finger of Fate" award to laugh together at occasional gaffes and bloopers. Keep it light-hearted!
- Present a "Jumping In With Both Feet" award, using humorous and descriptive verse to explain the achievement.
- Give a box of "Super Heroes" cookies, bag of M&M's, mudpies or other treats.
- Present a ball cap with a special insignia, or other "custom" item.
- Start a "Grace Under Pressure" award that staff can anonymously give to each other. The award can be as simple as a single rose placed at the desk or work station.
- Reward regional office person who has best served your park that year. Give a plaque as a surprise at a regional staff meeting.
- Have coworkers nominate a person for achievements not ordinarily recognized through the Incentive Awards Program ("heroic" deeds, complex, arduous or thankless in nature). Give an "Atta Person" award, creating a special memento that rotates between recipients.
- Check educational supply stores for inexpensive and creative awards paraphernalia.
### Hoopla/Work Team Celebrations

- Occasionally hold a pancake breakfast for your staff. Do the cooking yourself. Bake birthday cakes for everyone.
- Hold a birthday party each month so that over the course of the year all staff are recognized.
- Invite all staff to potlucks to meet international visitors or other special park guests.
- Take work teams to lunch after project milestones are reached, or provide refreshments for an after-hours bash.
- Hold end-of-season celebrations: fun runs, abalone feeds, food and drink tastings, and ball games. Build on your park or site theme, if possible.
- Celebrate significant dates associated with your site and program.
- Have all staff work together on one big project for a day.
- Hold an annual awards potluck or BBQ (all-park or divisional) and acknowledge the contribution of each individual.
- Hold competitions or contests between divisions.
- Hold a "rodeo" to display specific skills, such as with horses or with heavy equipment.
- Bring in a cappuccino maker on cold mornings to get your trail crew off to a good start.
- Hold a "perfect failure" celebration to put a bad experience behind you.

### Personalized Attention and Special Privileges

- Give people a "breather" from physical labor.
- Send headquarters staff on a tour, orientation, or walk. Find ways to get office-bound staff to the field to see the operation and how their work is utilized.
- Take people "off the line" and assign them to other necessary work. Give choice assignments, creative work. Let staff pick assignments.
- Take individuals to lunch and discuss their NPS career. "Where do you see yourself in 10 years?"
- Rotate person temporarily out of an isolated or difficult assignment. Give split assignments for variety.
- Find other ways to relieve "burnout", such as allowing extended unpaid leave or sending the person to another park for the summer in exchange for that park's seasonal FTEs.
- Ask staff, "What can I do for you?" (Examples: Better tools, more privacy, flexible scheduling to attend training or fitness programs.)
- Send person on a work-related "field trip" to view and learn from a different operation. Ask "What can we apply?"

### Public or Peer Recognition/Publicity

- Recognize outstanding staff in park visitors' guides.
- Nominate employees for prestigious, outside awards.
- Seek press coverage whenever possible — for clean-up days, staff awards, special project completion, and donor or VIP recognition.
- Invite a celebrity to awards presentations, to make them more newsworthy.
- Get special projects written up into NPS publications and other trade journals or professional magazines.
- Have local city council pass a resolution acknowledging exceptional staff efforts (e.g., project completions, response to emergencies).
- Post or print any positive outside comments or ratings related to your operation.
- Explain at staff meetings what your work unit has accomplished. Give the names of individuals involved or bring them with you to explain their own projects.
• Whenever staff receive awards, send a press release and photos to the local paper.
• Read outside letters of appreciation and thanks at staff meetings.
• Credit staff who have helped design or build an exhibit, developed a proposal, written a publication.
• Keep a photo album of "before and after" pictures to visually remind staff of progress (e.g., site rehab, new exhibits). Show to other staff, management or regional visitors. Or, use a map with push pins to visually display the impact of work.
• Post an "honor roll" of employees who have received (or deserved) awards for their suggestions, outstanding performance, track record in safety, or minimal use of sick leave.
• Keep a "clipping file" of everything published or printed relating to your staff, division, or work unit. Keep the file accessible to staff and show it off to visitors.
• Set up a "good news" bulletin board for nothing but news on promotions, achievements, photos of new family members, and favorite cartoons.

"INVESTMENT-CENTERED" AWARDS/CAREER GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

• Give staff special assignments, more work, new responsibilities, or the authority to try something new.
• Follow up on all proposals received. Or, let staff follow up on and present their own proposals to management.
• Design projects so that people can see accomplishment. Design work to allow staff more direct contact with visitors, public, supportive peers.
• Let people contribute more. Give them responsibility for a specific part of the operation, such as maintaining equipment, staying current on an issue or stocking supplies.
• Find ways to get training and cross-training opportunities for staff. Use imagination in writing training justifications.
• Ask staff person to train others in what they themselves do well.
• Find other ways to get training, for example, working alongside a skilled person.
• Incorporate and credit staff input and analysis.
• Let people see their work implemented -- final outcomes, visitor feedback, management appreciation.
• Encourage staff to submit their work and ideas to professional magazines and trade journals, and allow some time to do it.
• Involve staff in selecting equipment and tools for the trade. Let them do the research, present alternatives.
• Ask what they need to do the job -- a new typewriter? reference books? better lighting? police vehicle with more power?
• Occasionally send a staff person to meetings in your place. Let staff deal with press, participate in decisions, experience the limelight.
• Whenever possible, let decisions made in your absence stand.
• Dip into your own pocket, if necessary, to purchase professional journals and trade magazines. Encourage professional identification.
• Place calls on employees' behalf to arrange cross-training, lateral swaps or special assignments.
• Send person to a conference or training related to their recent accomplishments.
• Select people for task forces, evaluation teams, collateral duties, and other special opportunities. Identify and reinforce aptitudes and interests.
• Identify and make use of peripheral skills whether editing, drafting, graphics, computers, or other.
• Let staff accompany you on trips when clearly related to career development.
### Chart 4

**The Power of Promotion**

Many organizations, both public and private, are breathing new life into suggestion programs using the "power of promotion."

**U.S. Department of the Navy (departmental guidelines)**

**Promotional Strategy:** Vary promotional media, emphasize matters of local interest, conduct a targeted campaign with competition between divisions, have an honor roll of suggesters, have a poster contest to obtain artwork, honor suggesters with a "Suggester of the Quarter" award, publicize suggesters in their hometown newspaper, circulate suggestion program statistics broken out by division, set goals for employee participation and publicize them.


**Promotional Strategy:** Get high level signatures on certificates and letters (it's both low cost and highly valued), give nominal awards for suggestions not meriting cash awards, have top management announce the program, consider a simple but appropriate logo and photograph suggestion award winners alongside evaluators.

**General Services Administration (GSA-wide)**

**Promotional Strategy:** Double the usual cash award for suggestions during a specified time period.

**H.R. Tectron, Inc. (California aerospace firm)**

**Promotional Strategy:** Have company president sign on all winning suggestions, present winners with crisp $100 bills at their job site, distribute suggestion notepads to employees with advice on translating good ideas into winning suggestions, and provide employees a hotline number to call for help when writing proposals.
As you make rewards and recognition more a part of your management style, keep the following in mind:

**No Time Off.** Federal managers are not allowed to give administrative leave as a reward. Supervisors can, of course, allow staff to schedule around desired time off, where the demands of the work permit.

**Give Credit, But Use Discretion.** Letting people stand out from the "faceless bureaucracy" encourages pride and a sense of accountability. The Federal Register now credits individual authors. Some Park Service interpretive displays are crediting by name the NPS staff who created them.

**Funding for "Unofficial" Recognition.** Most informal recognition can be done with no increased budget, just a little time. While there are no dollars programmed for incidental expenditures, there are ways to keep costs low. (Appropriated funds can be spent to promote the Incentive Awards Program, for example, to present an item to all employees who submit suggestions. The item must be of nominal value and bear an appropriate promotional message.)

**Travel Expenses to Attend Ceremonies for Non-Federally Sponsored Awards.** In a 1976 decision, the Comptroller General ruled that travel expenses for such purposes could be paid by the agency if there was a close relationship between an employee's official duties and the receipt of the award.

**External Awards and Promotions.** The requirement that supervisors consider whether employees have received incentive awards when qualifying and selecting them for promotion does not apply to privately-sponsored awards.

**Publicizing Awards and Privacy.** Publicizing basic information about employee achievements does not violate an employee's right to privacy. But make sure also that it does not violate the employee's preference for privacy.

**Awards for Sick Leave Savers.** Monetary recognition for employees who use little or no sick leave is not an appropriate use of award authorities, even though abuse of sick leave has a real impact on productivity. (Supervisors can address the issue through informal rewards and recognition.)
"In our park we keep a reading file, and often circulate current articles on management topics to spur discussion at staff meetings." ... NPS administrative assistant

RESOURCE SECTION G

USEFUL REFERENCES

- Government Publications
- Other References
- NPS Resources
GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS


This publication provides overview information geared to the supervisor submitting award nominations.


This report points to problems with the Incentive Awards Program and suggests ways that agencies and individual supervisors can strengthen the program.


This is the bible for the Federal Incentive Awards Program. While it is most useful for awards program staff, supervisors can benefit directly from much of the information.


This bimonthly newsletter gives program guidance, updates, promotional aids, and other useful information for persons with awards program responsibilities.


This handbook's strength is its concise, non-bureaucratic language. Written for supervisors, it pulls together the essentials of managing people in the federal system.


This is one of a series of publications on exemplary practices in federal productivity. It spotlights the Navy's performance contingent reward system.


This report includes a discussion on reward systems as they relate to psychological participation in an organization.
OTHER REFERENCES


Presents three practical, yet simple suggestions for improving people management through feedback.


This book describes how an organization's "culture", including its reward and recognition systems, affects its ability to survive and accomplish.


This short article recaps how positive feedback raises productivity. In the author's words, "People work for love and money."


This short article discusses the results of a far-reaching study of employee perspectives on meaningful recognition.


This book emphasizes investment-centered awards, and energizing employees through involving and empowering them.

* *Supervision in the 80s: Trends in Corporate America*, Opinion Research Corporation, Princeton, New Jersey, 1984

This comprehensive report outlines major findings in the American workplace and their implications for organizations.


This book describes eight basic traits shared by America's best-run companies. Includes examples of what these companies do to create hoopla and celebration.

This short article emphasizes performance-contingent pay and simple, direct incentives. Features Jack Greyson of the American Productivity Center.

* "Worker Woes? Motivate the Good Ones, not the Bad," Incentive Marketing, October 1983

This short article describes Diamond International's resounding success with its 100 club.

NOTE:

Should you be unable to obtain any of the above from the sources listed, contact the PARTS Division, National Park Service, 450 Golden Gate Avenue, Box 36063, San Francisco, CA 94102 or call 415-556-8710.

NPS RESOURCES

The following is a list of resources available to park units from the Division of Park and Recreation Technical Services (PARTS — see above address). Check with your own regional awards program staff for resources related specifically to the Incentive Awards Program.

- **Rewards and Recognition Slide-Tape Show.** This 16 minute show, available on loan, emphasizes the importance of recognition. Includes NPS employee testimony. Good discussion piece for parks interested in improving recognition efforts.

- **Rewards and Recognition Examples Loan Package.** This package includes additional slides (mounted in plastic sleeves) and examples from awards programs.

- **"Thank You"/"Another Job Well Done" Recognition Notes.** Designed specifically for NPS use, the two different recognition notes can be used to relay appreciation to others.

- **Rewards and Recognition Training Package.** This package includes a lesson plan, handouts, and leader's aids for a 3 1/2 hour workshop. Reinforces material in this information piece. Self-guiding.