

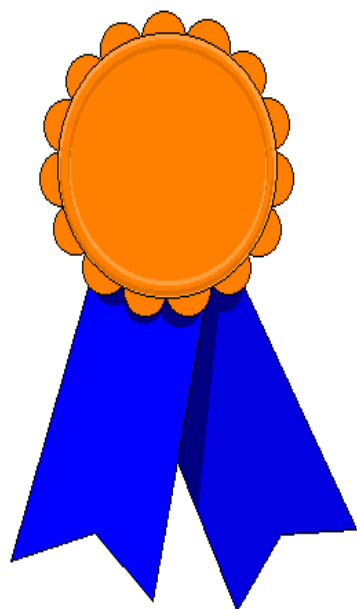
GSS Newsletter SSS

Social Statistics and Government Statistics Section

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Tom Jabine Receives Roger Herriot Award

Tom Jabine is the 1999 recipient of the Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics. Tom received the award at the Joint Statistical Meetings in Baltimore on August 9 prior to the invited paper session on "Measuring Poverty: Questions, Approaches and Findings." Tom was recognized for his outstanding contributions to the federal statistical system as a researcher, manager, advisor, and consultant.

Tom's contributions have taken place along many dimensions. Early in his career, Tom worked on "cutting edge" survey research and sampling problems under the direction of Bill Hurwitz in the Census Bureau's Statistical Research Division. He later worked as consultant in countries with less-developed statistical systems and initiated the successful use of modern statistical methods in these countries. As Chief Statistician at the Social Security Administration, he led the office in adhering to high statistical principles in the implementation of the Tax Reform Act of 1976 and the Freedom of Information Act. While at the Energy Information Administration in its early years, Tom helped the EIA establish its role as a statistical agency supporting government policy makers and the general public. At both the Social Security Administration and the Energy Information Administration, Tom helped develop innovative statistical methods and approaches to protect the privacy and confidentiality of survey data and administrative records. Later as a member of the National Academy of Sciences' Panel on Confidentiality and Data Access, he also made important contributions.

Tom is a leading figure in fostering interdisciplinary research on the cognitive aspects of survey methodology. He played important roles in the planning and organization of seminars to help bridge the communication gap between survey methodologists and cognitive psychologists. Tom has made very important contributions to the development and production of documentation on the sources and magnitude of errors in surveys, having authored three survey quality profiles. Finally, Tom is a leader in the use of statistical techniques in monitoring, protecting, and advancing the causes of human rights through the Science and Human Rights Program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Human Rights Committee of the American Statistical Association.

The Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics is sponsored by the Washington Statistical Society, the Social Statistics Section of the American Statistical Association (ASA), and the Government Statistics Section of the ASA. Roger Herriot was the Associate Commissioner for Statistical Standards and Methodology at the National Center for Education Statistics before he died in 1994. Throughout his career in the Federal statistical system, Roger showed extraordinary creativity in his approaches to the solution of statistical problems in federal data collection programs. Tom Jabine truly exemplifies this tradition. Previous recipients of the Herriot Award include Joseph Waksberg (1995), Monroe Sirken (1996), Constance Citro (1997), and Roderick Harrison and Clyde Tucker (1998).

Check Out FedStats

www.fedstats.gov

More than 70 agencies in the United States Federal Government produce statistics of interest to the public. The Federal Interagency Council on Statistical Policy maintains a site to provide easy access to the full range of statistics and information produced by many of the statistical agencies.

Get Ready for Indianapolis

Visit Indianapolis for the Joint Statistical Meetings in August 2000!

"Celebrate Diversity in Statistics"

Mark the dates: August 13 - 17, for the JSM Meetings in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Key Dates

- February 1, 2000 - Abstract deadline
- May 2000 - Preliminary program in Amstat News and on the JSM web site
- May 1 - Abstract Revision deadline
- May 15, 2000 - Registration materials available
- July 14, 2000 - Hotel reservations deadline
- July 14, 2000 - Last day for advance registration forms to arrive at the ASA office
- August 13-17, 2000 JSM Meetings in Indianapolis, Indiana

Location of Activities - Most activities will be scheduled in the Indiana Convention Center & RCA Dome and the Westin Indianapolis.

The Social Statistics and the Government Statistics Sections each have several exciting sessions, round~able luncheons, and posters planned for the upcoming meetings. Check upcoming Newsletters for additional information.

OMB to Propose Standards for Defining Metropolitan / Nonmetropolitan Areas

On October 20, OMB released the recommendations from the Metropolitan Area Standards Review Committee (MASRC) for changes to OMB's standards for defining metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. This is the first major revision of these concepts since 1970, when OMB developed new areas such as Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas (PMSA's) and Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA's). MASRC has recommended a Core-Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs) classification to replace the current Metropolitan Area (MA) classification. The cores (densely settled concentrations of population) for this classification would be Census Bureau defined urbanized areas and smaller densely settled "settlement clusters." The settlement clusters are new areas to be identified for the 2000 Census. CBSAs would be defined around these cores. This CBSA classification has three types of areas based on the

total population of all cores in the CBSA: 1) Megapolitan Areas defined around cores of at least 1,000,000 population; 2) Macropolitan Areas defined around cores of 50,000 to 999,999 population; and 3) Micropolitan Areas defined around cores of 10,000 to 49,999 population. Those counties containing the cores, should become the central counties of the CBSA's. Territory outside of Megapolitan, Macropolitan and Micropolitan Areas would be termed "Outside CBSAs." The MASRC has recommended the use of counties and equivalent entities as the building blocks for statistical areas throughout the United States and Puerto Rico, including the use of counties as the primary building blocks for statistical areas in New England. MASRC also recommended that Minor Civil Divisions (MCDs) be used as building blocks for an alternative set of statistical areas for the New England States only. A single threshold of 25 percent to establish qualifying linkages between outlying counties and counties containing the CBSA cores has also been recommended.

OMB is currently reviewing the comments received. The final standards will be announced by April 1, 2000. The actual areas, based upon 2000 Census commuting information will probably be available in 2003.

Federal Statistical Agencies

The Information for the following article was taken from information disseminated by the Council of Professional Associations (COPAFS) at its website

Responsibility for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of federal statistics is spread throughout the departments and independent agencies of the executive branch; each of some 70 agencies and departmental units annually spends \$500,000 or more on statistical activities. Within this decentralized system that generates statistical information, a more limited number of agencies have the creation of statistics as their principal mission. It is these agencies that are responsible for producing statistics on major economic, demographic, and social developments and trends.

Bureau of the Census

www.census.gov

The Bureau of the Census collects, compiles, and publishes a broad range of statistics on the population and the economy. The Census Bureau maintains several ongoing statistical programs including demographic surveys, international programs and data on construction, manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade, services, foreign trade, and state and local government finances and employment. In addition to the major periodic program, the Decennial Census, the Census Bureau carries out the

quinquennial economic censuses and the census of governments. The Census Bureau maintains an extensive website.

Bureau of Labor Statistics

www.bls.gov

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the principal fact-finding agency in the federal government in the field of labor economics, has a dual mission: to provide general purpose statistics that support the formulation of economic and social policy decisions in the business and labor communities, in legislation, and other programs affecting labor; and to serve the program needs of the Department of Labor and other federal agencies that use the BLS data and research findings to administer and evaluate on-going programs, develop legislative proposals, and analyze economic and social problems.

To meet these objectives, BLS collects, processes, analyzes, and disseminates data on employment and unemployment, prices and cost of living, consumer expenditures, wages and employee benefits, occupational injuries and illnesses, collective bargaining activities, productivity and technological change in U.S. industries, and projections of economic growth, the labor force, and employment by industry and occupation.

Bureau of Economic Analysis

www.bea.doc.gov

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) provides a picture of the United States economy through the preparation, development and interpretation of the economic accounts. These accounts consist of the national income and product accounts, summarized by the gross domestic product (GDP); the wealth accounts that show the business and other components of national wealth; the input-output accounts that trace interrelationships among industrial markets; State and regional income and product accounts; and the United States balance of payments and associated international investment accounts. These economic accounts provide key information on economic growth, regional development, and the Nation's position in the world economy.

Statistics of Income, Internal Revenue Service

www.irs.ustreas.gov/prod/tax_stats

The Statistics of Income Division of the Internal Revenue Service is the statistical research arm of IRS. The SOI provides annual income, financial and tax-related data for individuals, corporations, partnerships, sole proprietorships and tax-exempt organizations. SOI is also developing work on a new family panel; a study of controlled foreign partnerships; statistics on foreign trusts of individuals; and a study on non-exempt charitable remainder trusts.

National Agricultural Statistics Service

www.usda.gov/nass

The Department of Agriculture published its first crop report in 1863, and further strengthened this responsibility in 1905 by creating the Crop Reporting Board (now the Agricultural Statistics Board). The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has the responsibility for collecting and publishing current statistics on the Nation's agriculture. NASS collects and reports data on a wide range of production, inventories, prices paid and received by farmers, costs of production, farm labor usage and wage rates, agricultural chemical use, and other agricultural statistics. Beginning in FY 1997, NASS is responsible for the census of agriculture program, which provides comprehensive data every 5 years on all aspects of the agricultural economy down to the county level. Data collection for the 1997 Census of Agriculture is currently underway.

Economic Research Service

www.econ/ag/gov

The Economic Research Service (ERS) is a research-oriented statistical agency that provides economic and other social science information and analysis related to the supply, demand and performance of domestic and international food and agricultural markets; indicators of food and consumer issues; economic and environmental indicators of agriculture production and resource use; and socio-economic indicators of the status and performance of the farm sector and the rural economy.

Energy Information Administration

www.eta.doe.gov

The Energy Information Administration (EIA) collects, analyzes, and disseminates information on energy resources, production, distribution, consumption, technology,

and related international, economic, and financial matters. EtA produces reports with statistical time series, projections of future energy trends, analyzes of topical energy issues, and supports the energy information requirements of the Department of Energy and other federal agencies. The primary customers of EtA services are public policy makers in the Department of Energy and the Congress. Other customers include other federal agencies, state and local governments, the energy industry, educational institutions, the news media, and the public.

National Center for Health Statistics

www.cdc.gov/nchs

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) monitors the Nation's health and use of health services and explores the relationship between risk factors and disease. Data sources include the Nation's vital statistics system and surveys involving personal interviews, physical examinations and laboratory testing, and information from health care providers. The mission of NCHS is to provide statistical information that will guide actions and policies to improve the health of the American people. Data from NCHS include the use of hospitals, nursing homes, physician services, financial and non-financial barriers to health care access; the health of racial and ethnic population groups; infant mortality, access to prenatal care; death from diseases such as cancer, heart disease, HIV/AIDS; health insurance coverage, immunization status, and other measures used to help design and monitor the impact of programs and policies that affect health and the health care system.

National Center for Education Statistics

nces.ed.gov

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) collects, analyzes and reports statistics on education in the United States, and conducts studies on comparisons of international education statistics. NCES also provides leadership in developing and promoting the use of standardized terminology and definitions for the collection of education statistics.

Bureau of Justice Statistics

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) is responsible for the collection, analysis, and publication of statistical information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operations of justice systems at all levels of government and internationally.

The mission of the Bureau is to provide accurate and timely justice data and to support the emerging capacity of State and local governments in the use of these data for their justice programs. BJS plans to continue to maintain its more than two dozen major data collection series.

Bureau of Transportation Statistics

www.bls.gov

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) compiles, analyzes, and produces information on the Nation's transportation system. BTS also collects information on modes of transportation and other areas as needed, and enhances the quality and effectiveness of the statistical programs of the Department of Transportation (DOT) through research, the development of guidelines, and the promotion of improvements in data acquisition and use. The BTS was mandated by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 and implemented in December 1992 as the newest operating administration within the DOT. In 1998 BTS was reauthorized in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-2 1).

Notes from the September 17, 1999 COPAFS Meeting

Ed Spar called the meeting to order, explaining that in the absence of several board members, he would be running the show today. Moving directly to his Executive Director's report, Ed distributed the first four pages of the current statistical consolidation bill, and noted that on Wednesday, the House decided to scrap the consolidation part of the initiative. Instead, the House will mark up a bill on data sharing (to be called the Statistical Efficiency Act). Ed described this as a great step forward--recognizing the merit of data sharing, and the reality that agency consolidation is just not going to happen. Next, Ed directed our attention to the latest budget numbers. The Senate census appropriation is still less than that of the House, and it is not clear how this difference will be resolved in conference.

In other news, OMB indicates that we should expect no new guidelines on the tabulation of race and ethnic data until next year. Tabulations on PL94-171, however, will present block data for all 63 race/ethnic combinations--not the "mini" and "maxi" tables proposed earlier. The Secretary of Commerce has proposed the elimination of NTIS. The proposal is being contested (by NTIS of course), but Ed suggests that the issue of importance to data users is whether NTIS products would be handled through the Library of Congress (as the Secretary proposes) or National Archives (as some recommend). Ed will keep us posted. For the latest on Circular A-1 10, Ed provided

OMB's most recent wording on what data would have to be provided under FOIA. BEA is reportedly making changes in the ways it measures economic growth. Ed indicates that some of these changes could have significant effects, and will arrange for a presentation on the subject at a future COPAFS meeting.

Returning to Census Bureau news, Ed described the Bureau's plans to produce data for ZIP Code tabulation areas, and noted that we can expect to see a Federal Register notice on new Metropolitan Area definitions within a month. He also touched on the recent calls for the inclusion of the Puerto Rican count as part of U.S. population, and speculated that the idea will not go far. Ed concluded his report with the sad news of the passing of Conrad Taeuber on September 11 at the age of 94.

Presentations at the COPAFS Include:

Don Oellerich, Department of Health and Human Services

Measuring Welfare Reform - Are We Getting the Data We Need?

Don started by summarizing the basics of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), better known as welfare reform. The Act replaces AFDC with federal block grants to the states, which are given considerable flexibility in the administration of their programs. The new emphasis (which Don noted dates back to the 1980s) is away from women at home taking care of kids, to moving recipients into the workplace. In addition to work requirements, there is a five-year lifetime limit on the receipt of federal benefits, and the loss of individuals' entitlement to benefits.

Don described how the states are administering these devolved responsibilities, then stepped up to the question of whether we are getting the data we need to evaluate how things are going. He candidly commented that we do not know yet, but noted that before PRWORA, most data came from the national surveys, such as CPS and SIPP. However, with responsibility devolved to the states, there is now a greater need for state level data. Most data indicate that welfare case loads have dropped, but the drop varies by state--with some experiencing large drops, and some small drops. Measurement is clearly an issue, as some of the drop may be a function of the states shifting people from programs classified as "assistance" to programs not classified as such. One consequence of these shifts is the loss of microdata required for the tracking of those on "assistance." In addition to the definition issue, there are questions concerning how much of the drop in welfare rolls is due to welfare reform. Some estimates attribute much of the drop to the strong economy (and factors such as the increase in the minimum wage), and give only partial credit to PRWORA. The

problem, Don commented, is that we really do not have the data necessary to measure these effects.

Don described a broad range of data requirements, some of which go beyond what is provided by the national surveys and the states themselves. Data are needed on both people and families--those on assistance and those not on assistance. Don stressed the need for data to better identify what happens to people after they leave welfare, and he indicated that they will be able to do some of that through the matching of Social Security numbers to earnings records.

Don noted that the Urban Institute, the Congressional Research Service, and other organizations are collecting some relevant data, but commented that not all of these data will be publicly available. As for the national surveys, under-reporting is up, and HHS is working with the Census Bureau on ways to bring reporting levels back up. Part of the reporting problem, Don explained, is that welfare used to be welfare, but in the present environment, people find themselves in various state programs that are not so readily identified as such. Given the increasingly complicated context (some states are even devolving welfare to the counties), Don noted that administrative data are increasingly important. Again, they look to linking as the best way to track those who have left the welfare rolls. More specifically, it appears that the combination of administrative and survey data will be required to answer basic questions concerning the impact and performance of welfare reform.

Jorge del Pinal, Bureau of the Census

Some Findings on Race and Ethnicity Data

Jorge started with an overview of the 1998 dress rehearsal, and the new OMB standards for race and ethnic data. For many in attendance, his presentation of the 1998 dress rehearsal results was the first opportunity to see real data collected and tabulated based on the new definitions. Of course, the biggest difference in the new definitions is the option for multiple race responses, and the dress rehearsal data suggest that the impact of multi-race responses can vary. For example, the percent of population reporting two or more race categories was 5.4 percent in Sacramento, 0.8 percent in Columbia, SC, and 1.2 percent in Menominee. Persons of Hispanic ethnicity were more likely to mark two or more races in all dress rehearsal areas--thus the higher percentage in Sacramento, the site with the largest Hispanic component. The good news, Jorge noted, was that of those who marked two or more races, about 90 percent marked only two. Some respondents marked all six, but not many. The data confirm that the most popular multi-race combinations also varied by site. "White & Other" and "White & Asian" were the most popular in Sacramento, while "White &

Black" and "White & American Indian" were most popular in South Carolina. As one might expect, "White and American Indian" and "Black & American Indian" were the only combinations of note in Menominee. Again, Jorge highlighted the good news--that it does not take many combinations of two races to cover most of the multiple race responses in a given area.

Next, Jorge presented examples of the "lower bound" (single race) and "upper bound" (all-inclusive) race distributions for the dress rehearsal sites. With so many users focusing on how complicated tabulations and comparability have become, it is reassuring to see how similar the single race and upper bound distributions were. The alternative tabulations yielded different numbers and percentages, but very similar pictures of each area's race composition. Non-response to the race question was highest in Sacramento at 5.2 percent (versus 1.2 and 0.6 percent in Columbia and Menominee). Again, Sacramento's heavier Hispanic composition accounts for the difference, as most non-response to the race question continues to come from Hispanics.

Jorge concluded with a review of the Hispanic data for the dress rehearsal sites. A small, but notable, percentage reports multiple origins--either Hispanic & non-Hispanic or multiples categories of Hispanic type (e.g., Cuban & Puerto Rican). Non-response to the Hispanic question is said to be down in all sites, relative to 1990--apparently due to the positioning of the Hispanic question before the race question.

Discussion followed on questionnaire wording, and the conceptual distinctions between race, ethnicity, and national origin. Linda Gage noted that in California, they treat Hispanic ethnicity as a race, and have prepared detailed tabulations of the Sacramento dress rehearsal data. Linda will provide these tables to Ed Spar, who will make them available to interested COPAFS members.

Karol Krotki. American Institutes for Research

Education Statistics Service Institute: A Statistical Organization in Support of NCES

Gary Phillips, Acting Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics introduced the presentation with remarks about the founding of the Education Statistics Service Institute (ESSI), and the valuable contributions it has already made to NCES. Karol Krotki then passed out an ESSI pamphlet and newsletter, and explained that ESSI was established in 1995 as part of the American Institutes for Research, under a five year contract. Its purpose is to improve the quality, relevance, and usability of NCES data; and to provide independent review and research support for the agency's data programs. ESSI consists of four "core" organizations--the American Institutes for Research (the lead organization), Mathematica Policy

Research, Policy Studies Associates, and Westat. In addition, a number of organizations (such as Rand Corporation) are "affiliates" of ESSI. However, Karol made it clear that ESSI is free-standing, and is not permitted to work for any other agencies. Their purpose is to serve NCES, and they maintain a close working relationship with them. ESSI staff includes statisticians, social science analysts, technology experts, and research assistants. They are involved in functional areas, including assessment, finance, management, long range survey development, ongoing survey support, statistics and publications/reports.

Among the challenges ESSI faces is tapping the pool of talent available from the core and affiliated organizations, and coordinating these varied resources to the benefit of NCES programs. According to Karol, ESSI is still new, and not all within NCES are aware of the contributions it can make. The relationship with NCES is still being developed, as are the fire walls between ESSI and the affiliated organizations. Despite such challenges, Karol reported that ESSI is already bringing a very talented and motivated staff to NCES projects, and providing a flexibility, versatility and rapid response capability that the agency would not likely be able to develop on its own.

Initially, ESSI was reacting to NCES requests, but Karol reported that they are becoming more proactive in recommending research. Their objective is to continue their current support of NCES programs, expand their research and development efforts, and ultimately establish ESSI as a leading edge research organization.

Ronald Sepanik. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Current Developments in Housing Statistics.

Ronald noted the long history of the American Housing Survey (AHS) but also how much experience has been lost in recent years, due to staff retirement and transfer. He explained that the AHS actually consists of a national survey and a metropolitan area survey--both done in partnership with the Census Bureau. And as many users recall, the "A" in AHS used to stand for "Annual," but it became biennial during the 1980s due to budget constraints. The AHS, according to Ronald, is always under budget pressure. The survey itself provides an impressive range of information--not only about housing units, but their occupants, and the characteristics of the neighborhoods they are in. Users are not always aware that this "housing" survey provides information on journey to work, second homes, and migration--where occupants lived last and reasons for moving. Also, the survey returns to sampled units, and has the

ability to provide longitudinal results. Ronald distributed a handout summarizing the data collected in the AHS.

Ronald noted the high cost of doing the metropolitan area survey (in 47 MAs), and said they will be re-assessing the importance of continuing the MA survey. Again, the budget pressures seem to be unrelenting. In response to a question, Ronald explained that the MA sample is not drawn in such a way that the results are representative of all metro areas. Rather, he described the sample as basically consisting of the largest metro areas--some of which are based on 1980 SMSA definitions while others are based on the more contemporary MSA/PMSA definitions.

Another recent development is the switch from paper and pencil survey methods to computer assisted data collection. This change in collection procedures has required the extensive rewriting of computer code, and some changes to the questionnaire (which they are trying to minimize). Other issues on the horizon include a redesign following the 2000 census, and an assessment of the implications of the American Community Survey on the future of the AHS

The Second International Conference on Establishment Surveys: June 17-21, 2000

The Second International Conference on Establishment Surveys (ICES-II) will be held June 17-21, 2000 in Buffalo, New York, at the Adams Mark Hotel. Since the first ICES was held in 1993, many new techniques have been implemented by practitioners around the globe. With the new millennium upon us, it is time for a forward look at methods for surveying businesses, farms, and institutions. ICES-II will contain invited and contributed paper sessions, software demonstrations, and short courses. The preliminary program can now be seen on their website. A hardcover volume of the invited papers—as well as CD-ROMs of the invited and contributed papers—will be produced after the conference.

A competition soliciting proposals for invited paper sessions drew an excellent response. From the submissions about 30 sessions were selected, representing authors in the statistical and economic communities from around the world. Topics to be presented at the conference include: the use of cognitive methods in establishment surveys; statistical graphics; Poisson sampling; coordinating sampling between and within surveys; strategies for editing and imputation; trend estimation; generalized systems for processing and for estimation; linking longitudinal business and household data; mail and web-based data collection; outliers; business registers; variance estimation with imputed data; seasonal, adjustment; coverage in school sampling frames; business metadata; the use of administrative records; and the

measurement of commodity flows. Contributed papers and software demonstrations have also been solicited.

Registration forms and more detailed information can be obtained on our web site at www.eia.doe.gov/ices2/index.html.

General questions about the conference can be addressed to John G. Kovar at kovar@statcan.ca or by calling (613) 951-8615. Questions about the contributed paper sessions should be addressed to Pat Cantwell at patrick.j.cantwell@ccmail.census.gov or by calling (301) 457-8105. Information about the software demonstrations should be addressed to Claude Poirier at poircla@statcan.ca or by calling (613) 951-1491.

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