

**GSS/SSS February 2007 NEWSLETTER**  
**Government Statistics and Social Statistics Sections**  
**American Statistical Association**

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SSS web site: <http://www.amstat.org/sections/ssoc/>

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**IN THIS ISSUE:**

- **GSS Looks Back at 2006: An Outstanding Year**
- **Award Nominees Sought**
  - **Herriot Award – Nominations Due April 1, 2007**
  - **Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship – Nominations Due April 15, 2007**
- **JSM 2006 Webcasts of Plenary Sessions**
- **Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM) 2007 Research Conference – Call for Papers**
- **Third International Conference on Establishment Surveys (ICES-III) – Early Bird Registration**

**Don't forget these deadlines ~~**

- **2007 ASA Fellows Nomination Package:** Contact: Dan Weinberg  
([daniel.h.weinberg@census.gov](mailto:daniel.h.weinberg@census.gov))  
**Deadline: March 1, 2007, to ASA**
- **FCSM Call for Papers:** See website for details: <http://www.fcsm.gov/events>  
**Deadline: March 8, 2007**
- **ICES-III Early Bird Registration:** See website for details:  
<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/ices/2007/index.cfm>  
**Deadline: March 29, 2007**
- **Jeanne Griffith Mentoring Award:** Contact: Ed Spar at COPAFS  
([copafs@aol.com](mailto:copafs@aol.com))  
**Deadline: April 1, 2007**

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**GSS Looks Back at 2006: An Outstanding Year!**

*by Stephanie Shipp, Chair, GSS, 2006*

The Section on Government Statistics accomplished many important activities in 2006 and set a firm foundation to continue to thrive in 2007. An energetic Executive Committee with excellent execution skills enhanced the Section's visibility and credibility.

Below are highlights of our activities and accomplishments.

**Communication:** Robert Lussier oversaw the writing and publication of articles in every issue of *Amstat News*. He and Pat Melvin, in collaboration with Beth Kills from the Social Statistics Section, provided up-to-date electronic news every month to the GSS members. Bill Wong maintains the website and kept it up-to-date with recent announcements and news that affect GSS members and Tai Phan coordinates the GSS Listserve. Welcome to Sonya Vartivarian as the new Publication Officer.

**JSM sessions:** Mike Cohen organized four invited sessions on topics ranging from statistical careers in government agencies to federal data sharing, nine topic contributed sessions and 5 contributed sessions. Robie Sangster organized four roundtables, including one on data needs resulting from Hurricane Katrina. She also organized four invited sessions for the JSM 2007 in Salt Lake City. Welcome to Mike Davern, the Program Chair-elect, who is seeking ideas and volunteers to coordinate roundtables for JSM 2007 and invited sessions for JSM 2008 in Denver (daver004@umn.edu).

**Conferences** Steve Cohen, Chair-Elect, organized the International Conference on Establishment Surveys to be held in Montreal in June 2007. We are joining four other groups to co-sponsor the event. Please consider attending this valuable conference.

**Strategic Initiatives:** ASA accepted Steve Cohen's Strategic Initiative proposal for a Workshop on Disruptions. Using strategic initiative funding and funding from two other sources, the workshop will be held in March 2007 with statistical agencies and academic researchers participating. In addition, GSS co-sponsored a Strategic Initiative proposal with the Committee on Statistics and Disability to webcast three plenary sessions from the Joint Statistical Meetings in Seattle. Thanks to Carolyn Shettle's coordination, the webcast sessions are now available on [www.amstat.org](http://www.amstat.org). The sessions are

1. Presidential Invited Address: *A Data-Driven World: Why Now, and What Do We Do about It?* William R. Pulleyblank;
  2. Deming Lecture: *Making Another World: a Holistic Approach to Performance Improvement*. Ronald D. Snee;
  3. ASA Presidential Address: *From Data to Policy: Scientific Excellence Is Our Future*. Sallie Keller-McNulty.
- Please watch these webcasts and provide feedback to Carolyn (CarolynShettle@westat.com).

**Awards:** Our section co-sponsors several awards. Congratulations to Martin O'Connell, the recipient of the Jeanne Griffith Mentoring Award; to Maria Ciarleglio as the 2006 Wray Jackson Smith scholarship winner; to Nat Schenker, the Herriot award; and to Robert Lussier, the Pat Doyle Memorial award for service to GSS. And many thanks to our awards committee members who advertise, review, and select the final awardees.

**Corporate Sponsorship:** Chet Bowie did an outstanding job in recruiting corporate sponsors from Internal Revenue Service, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census Bureau, National Agriculture Statistics Service, and Social Security Administration. Their support is critical to the effective functioning of our section and allows us to sponsor conferences, scholarships, and other events of interest to our members. I will be taking over this responsibility in 2007, so please contact me if your agency would like to sponsor GSS. (sshipp919@comcast.net)

**Executive Committee.** We met in March, August (at JSM) and December. At the December meeting, we reviewed and updated the GSS charter, which will be reviewed by the Council of Sections and then included with the 2007 ballot to be approved by GSS members. Please be sure to review and vote on our charter in the next election.

**Farewells and Welcomes:** Thanks to an excellent Executive Committee for their contributions to GSS:

- Mike Cohen, Program Chair, for organizing excellent sessions for JSM 2005 and 2006.
- John Hall, Secretary -Treasurer, who ensured that our minutes and budgets were up-to-date and accurate.
- Robert Lussier, Publications Officer, and Pat Melvin, Newsletter Editor, for their commitment to showcasing GSS in *Amstat News* and on our website.
- Dan Kasprzyk, for representing GSS at the Council of Sections and for keeping us informed on important issues raised by COS.
- Wendy Alvey, one of our two COPAFS representatives. Even though recently retired, she has promised to continue publishing our brochures.

Welcome to our new members of the Executive Committee.

- Chair-Elect: Carol C. House, National Agricultural Statistics Service
- Program Chair-elect Michael E. Davern, University of Minnesota
- Secretary/Treasurer: Randy (Lester R.) Curtin, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
- Publications Officer: Sonya L. Vartivarian, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.
- Council of Sections Representative for GSS: Carolee Bush, CB & Associates
- COPAFS representative: Chet Bowie, Market Strategies, will transition from past-Chair to this position.

Janet Norwood, former Bureau of Labor Statistics commissioner, in her talk at the Census Bureau's Wise Elders Program, stated that "...you cannot have a democracy without a statistical system that is objective and accurate." The Section on Government Statistics is an important group that works to ensure that these goals are met.

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## **Herriot Award Nominations Sought**

*By Daniel H Weinberg, Roger Herriot Award Committee*

Nominations are sought for the 2007 Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics. The award is intended to reflect the special characteristics that marked Roger Herriot's career:

- Dedication to the issues of measurement;
- Improvements in the efficiency of data collection programs; and
- Improvements and use of statistical data for policy analysis.

The award is not limited to senior members of an organization, nor is it to be considered as a culmination of a long period of service. Individuals at all levels within Federal statistical agencies, other government organizations, nonprofit organizations, the private sector, and the academic community may be nominated on the basis of their contributions.

The recipient of the 2007 Roger Herriot Award will be chosen by a committee comprising representatives of the Social Statistics and Government Statistics Sections of the American Statistical Association, and of the Washington Statistical Society. Roger Herriot was associated with and strongly supportive of these organizations during his career. The award consists of a \$1,000 honorarium and a framed citation, which will be presented at a ceremony at the Joint Statistical Meetings in August 2007. The Washington Statistical Society will also host a seminar given by the winner on a subject of his or her own choosing.

The previous recipients of the Roger Herriot Award are Joseph Waksberg (Westat), Monroe Sirken (NCHS), Constance Citro (CNStat), Roderick Harrison (Census Bureau), Clyde Tucker (BLS), Thomas Jabine (SSA, EIA, CNStat), Donald Dillman (Washington State University), Jeanne Griffith (OMB, NCES, NSF), Daniel Weinberg (Census Bureau), David Banks (FDA, BTS, NIST), Paula Schneider (Census Bureau), Robert E. Fay III (Census Bureau), and Nathaniel Schenker (NCHS).

Nominations for the 2007 award will be accepted beginning in February 2007. Nomination packages should contain:

- A cover letter from the nominator that should include references to specific examples of the nominee's contributions to innovation in Federal statistics. These contributions can be to methodology, procedure, organization, administration, or other areas of Federal statistics, and need not have been made by or while a Federal employee.
- Up to six additional letters in support that demonstrate the innovativeness of each contribution.
- A current vita for the nominee, including contact information.

Both individual and group nominations may be submitted. The committee may consider nominations made for the 2006 award, but it encourages resubmission of those nominations with updated information.

**For more information, contact Daniel Weinberg, Chair, 2007 Roger Herriot Award Committee, at 301 763-5791 or [Daniel.H.Weinberg@census.gov](mailto:Daniel.H.Weinberg@census.gov).** Completed packages must be received by April 1, 2007. Electronic submissions in MS-Word or as a "pdf" file are encouraged.

Alternately, nominations may be mailed to:  
Dr. Daniel H. Weinberg  
Chief, Center for Economic Statistics

U.S. Census Bureau  
Washington, DC 20233-6300

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### New Nominations Sought For 2007 Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship: April 15, 2007 Deadline

Nominations are now being sought for the 2007 Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship. The award is intended to reward promising young statisticians for their diligence and encourage them to consider a future in government statistics. The 2007 recipient of the scholarship will be chosen by a committee of representatives of the Government Statistics and Social Statistics Sections (GSS and SSS). Applicants are not required to be members of GSS, SSS or ASA. Dr. Smith was strongly supportive of these organizations during his career and actively mentored younger statisticians. The scholarship of \$1,000.00 can be used for activities like the following:

- Attendance at a conference, short course, or long course
- Travel to a conference
- Purchase of government data
- Costs associated with research

The Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship Eligibility Requirements include:

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent
- Participation in the advancement of government statistics, whether as a government employee, researcher under government contract or using government statistics, or student involved with government statistics

To apply, you will need to complete and submit the following:

- The original copy of an application (available in MS Word format: <http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/wjsapp07.doc> and Adobe pdf format: <http://www.amstat.org/sections/sgovt/wjsapp07.pdf>)
- Original transcripts, performance reviews, or alternate proof of superior job performance
- Project proposal
- Two reference letters

For more information, contact Juanita Tamayo Lott, 2007 Chair of the Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship Committee, 301.763.3127 or [juanita.t.lott@census.gov](mailto:juanita.t.lott@census.gov). The other committee members are Michael P. Cohen and Bob Kominski. **All necessary materials must be submitted by April 15, 2007.** Electronic submissions are permissible.

All materials should be mailed before April 15, 2007, to:

Juanita Tamayo Lott  
Human Resources Division  
U.S. Census Bureau  
Washington, D.C. 20233-1400

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### JSM 2006 Webcasts of Plenary Sessions

Did you miss JSM 2006? Or maybe you went, but missed some sessions you really wanted to attend? If so, you now have an opportunity to watch one or more of the Webcasts of three well-attended plenary sessions, now available on ASA's website (<http://www.amstat.org/>).

These Webcasts have been funded by ASA's Special Initiatives program. The Disabilities Committee formulated the proposal for this initiative after reviewing responses to the surveys conducted by the Self-Awareness Task Force (now the Membership Surveys Committee). Other co-sponsors include the Section on Government Statistics, the International Committee, and the Advisory Committee on Continuing Education. The primary goal of the initiative is to provide access over the Internet to three plenary sessions to ASA members with disabilities, international members, state and local statisticians, and others unable to attend JSM 2006. A secondary goal is to allow non-ASA members to learn more about our meetings.

If these Webcasts prove to be a popular benefit, ASA will consider continuing or expanding the program. To determine members' views of the Webcasts, ASA will track the number of persons taking advantage of the Webcasts and the Membership Surveys Committee will conduct surveys both of those who register to see the Webcast and a random sample of ASA members.

The following provides information on the available Webcasts:

- **Presidential Invited Address: *A Data-Driven World: Why Now, and What Do We Do about It?* William R. Pulleyblank** is the vice president of the Center for Business Optimization within IBM Business Consulting Services. His research interests are in operations research, combinatorial optimization, and applications of optimization. ABSTRACT: Business and industry are experiencing a transformation in the way they handle their operations and planning due to technology advances, globalization and economic pressures, and the development of enabling methods and tools. For this transformation to succeed, we must address five fundamental questions: How do we deal with massive amounts of noisy data, both repository and streaming? Can we develop adequate methods for handling risk and uncertainty? How should we deal with issues of distributed data and computation? What is required for operational systems to take advantage of data in the same way as planning systems? How do we incorporate these changes into the emerging networked business world? I will discuss these questions and ideas we are developing at IBM to find answers.
- **Deming Lecture: *Making Another World: a Holistic Approach to Performance Improvement.* Ronald D. Snee** is principal of Process and Organizational Excellence at Tunnell Consulting. His areas of research are performance improvement, statistics, quality, and management. ABSTRACT: Business improvement methodology, in which Deming played a leadership role, has been evolving for 100 years. Today, there are a number of effective improvement methods available, including Six Sigma, Lean Manufacturing, Baldrige Assessments, and ISO 9000. These options often result in nonproductive discussion about which improvement approach to use. But the prudent person uses all approaches, selecting the right tools for the problem at hand. To implement such a philosophy, one needs a holistic approach that integrates the useful tools from all approaches into a common methodology. Setting today's needs in the context of Deming's work, this talk will present an overview of a holistic approach, discuss methodology and several examples, and address the critical role of the statistician in improvement initiatives.
- **ASA Presidential Address: *From Data to Policy: Scientific Excellence Is Our Future.* Sallie Keller-McNulty** is dean of the George R. Brown School of Engineering, professor of statistics, and the E.D. Butcher Chair of Engineering at Rice University in Houston, Texas. Her areas of research are uncertainty quantification, computational and graphical statistics and related software and modeling techniques, and data access and confidentiality. ABSTRACT: Science, engineering, technology, and people must come together to support the growing complexity of today's global challenges, ranging from international security to space exploration. As scientists and engineers, it is essential that we develop the means to put our work into a decision context for policymakers. Scientific and technical progress requires interdisciplinary teams, as it is impossible for an individual to have the knowledge to solve many of today's problems. By the nature of our training, statisticians are well-poised to assume the role of science and technology integrator. To be successful, this will place statisticians closer to policy pressures and politics. This talk focuses on the growing expectations facing statistical sciences and how we, as statisticians, must take responsibility for separating the scientific method from the politics of the scientific process.

In addition to watching the Webcasts yourself, you may wish to suggest a group viewing to your employer or other organization(s) in which you are active. Individuals wishing more information about this initiative may contact Carolyn Shettle at [carolynshettle@westat.com](mailto:carolynshettle@westat.com) (301-251-4324).

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## CALL FOR PAPERS - 2007 Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM) Research Conference

The 2007 Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology Research conference will be held November 5-7, 2007 in Arlington, Virginia. The conference provides a forum for experts from around the world to discuss and exchange current research and methodological topics relevant to Federal government statistical programs. Possible session topics include, but are not limited to:

- Questionnaire design issues
- Treatment of missing data
- Web data collection issues
- Development of economic indicators
- Bayesian methods
- Variance estimation
- Analysis of complex surveys
- Sample design and estimation methods
- Nonsampling error
- Nonresponse research and coverage issues
- Statistical uses of administrative records
- Design and analysis of longitudinal surveys
- Confidentiality, disclosure and privacy issues
- Statistical modeling

Abstracts are due **March 8, 2007**. For more information please visit the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology website at:  
<http://www.fcsm.gov/events>

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## ICES-III: The Third International Conference on Establishment Surveys: Focuses on Survey Methods for Businesses, Farms, and Institutions - Early Bird Registration

ICES-III will take place June 18–21, 2007 in central Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The conference promises to be a stimulating and full examination of the current state of the art for surveying businesses, farms, and institutions. Both the invited and contributed programs cover a spectrum of interesting and applicable subjects.

The invited program includes the following 23 sessions: Steps To Provide Quality Industrial Coding for a Business Register, Surveys of Environmental Protection: Experiences and Challenges, Efficient Use of Administrative Data in Business Surveys, Commodity Flow Surveys, Editing & Imputation Strategies to Improve Statistics Using Tax Data, The New Direction of Business Surveys: the Integrated Approach, Advances in Disclosure Protection – Releasing More Business and Farm Data to the Public, Outliers and Influential Observations in Establishment Surveys, Use of Metadata for Establishment Surveys, Targeting Intensive Follow-up of Nonrespondents in Establishment Surveys, Building and Updating Establishment Registries in Developing Countries, The Influences of K.R.W. Brewer on Establishment Surveys, Collecting Data Electronically from Businesses: the Dream and the Reality, Improving Statistics on the Subnational Public Sector, Challenges and Strategies in Implementing Quality Management Programs, A Global Path to Standards in Questionnaire Design, Methods Addressing Agricultural Statistics Issues, Goals and Issues in the Development of the Services Producer Price Index, Getting Response: the Respondent's Perspective, Usage of Linearization Variance Estimators for Survey Estimates, Improving the Measurement of Service Sector Statistics: Challenges and Achievements, Generalized Survey Processing Systems – An Update, and Towards a Better Understanding of the Response Process in Surveys of Businesses and Organizations

Introductory overview lectures cover topics not included in the invited program to fully round out the invited schedule.

Early bird registration fees end on March 29, 2007. Fees will increase by \$100.00 after this date along with significant increases in short course fees. Check out the program and register early to save money!! Housing registration through the ICES III web page is also open.

The entire program along with additional information is available on the ICES III web site:  
<http://www.amstat.org/meetings/ices/2007/index.cfm>

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## GOVERNMENT STATISTICS SECTION

*The mission of the Government Statistics Section (GSS) is to promote the use of sound statistical theory and methods in the production of data at all levels of government - be it Federal, State, local, or international; assist in the broad dissemination of those data; and encourage good statistical practice by all users. Areas of interest for the Section include all that involve the production, dissemination, and application of governmental statistics, including concern with statistical policy issues, quality and usefulness of governmental data products, special problems of State and local data, comparability of data among different countries, and the role of professional statisticians in the public sector.*

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## SOCIAL STATISTICS SECTION

*The Social Statistics Section seeks to advance research in social statistics, both in areas which involve the use of methods of statistical inquiry, and in those which involve the use of statistical data and the development of statistical measurement. This section will also plan for active participation in the affairs of the American Statistical Association by those interested in these matters and for representation of activities in this major field in the program of the ASA.*

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