

GSS/SSS DECEMBER 2006 NEWSLETTER
Government Statistics and Social Statistics Sections
American Statistical Association

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Government Statistics and Social Statistics Section News

PASSING THE TORCH

By Beth Kilss, SSS Publications Officer

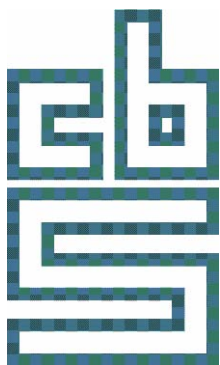
The December issue of the *GSS/SSS Newsletter* marks the end of the 2-year collaboration by Pat Melvin, GSS Newsletter Editor; Robert Lussier, GSS Publications Officer; and myself, SSS Publications Officer, to produce this newsletter. It also marks the end of our terms of office. During this time, we have enjoyed the challenge of bringing you the news of the Government Statistics and Social Statistics Sections in an electronic format and hope that you have found it useful and informative. The end of our tenures, however, does not mean the end of the newsletter. Au contraire! We are pleased to tell you that, indeed, the newsletter is alive and well and will continue long into the future. And it will be in very capable hands. Beginning with the January edition, Government Statistics Section Publications Officer **Sonya Vartivarian**, a statistician with Mathematica Policy Research (SVartivarian@Mathematica-MPR.com), and Social Statistics Section Publications Officer, **Sharon Stern**, a statistician with the U.S. Census Bureau (sharon.m.stern@census.gov), will take the reigns and will continue to produce the *GSS/SSS Newsletter* for the next 2 years. And, like Pat, Robert, and I, they, too, will be counting on you to contribute articles, news items of interest, and announcements about upcoming events, among other newsworthy material, to share with our members through this medium. Please join me in welcoming Sonya and Sharon to their new roles!

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## Government Statistics Section

### STATISTICS NETHERLANDS: MAIN FEATURES AND CHALLENGES

by Ada van Krimpen<sup>1</sup>, Director International Relations, Statistics Netherlands



CBS logo

The Director-general of Statistics is the supreme authority in terms of methodology and publications. In these fields, he is completely independent from central government. There is a high-level, independent Central Commission for Statistics (CCS) to authorise the statistical programme and to supervise SN as a board of governors. The eleven members of the CCS meet at least four times a year. Two new and important features of the current statistical legislation are the legal acknowledgment of SN as the national authority to implement the EU statistical programme, and the unconditional (i.e. costless) access to administrative data, supplemented by the possibility of administrative fines where a response obligation is still required for the production of economic statistics.

#### **Statistics Netherlands: History and Present Status**

Statistics Netherlands (in brief: SN, in Dutch: *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek*) is the national official statistical institute of the Netherlands. Its mission is:

*to be the independent provider in the field of high quality, coherent, public statistical information over - in principle - all sectors of Dutch society*

It was founded in 1899 and was most recently given a new legal statute in 2003. Whatever its legal status, centralisation and independence have always been prime characteristics of Dutch official statistics. SN produces the vast majority (about 95%) of Dutch official statistics. There are research departments at the ministries, there are so-called planning agencies (which are in fact government think-tanks), and there is *De Nederlandsche Bank*, the Dutch central bank, which produces a small number of financial and monetary statistics. But in comparison to the statistical programme and the budget of SN, all these efforts are relatively minor.

<sup>1</sup> For this article, parts of the article 'Clog counters' by Joris Nobel were used, published in the 'International Update' of ONS (UK), February 2006. The author Ada van Krimpen can be contacted at [akin@cbs.nl](mailto:akin@cbs.nl).



*The office building of Statistics Netherlands in Voorburg.*

### **Characteristics of Dutch Official Statistics**

A prime characteristic of Dutch official statistics is the traditional overriding importance attached to statistical integration and accounting. Historical roots can be traced back to the intellectual and practical influence of later Nobel Prize winner Jan Tinbergen, who initiated the Dutch System of National accounts. During the seventies, eighties and nineties the Dutch school of national accounting developed NAMEA for environmental accounting, and other modules in addition to the System of National Accounts.

These days micro-integration comes to be the core of the Dutch statistical strategy. Matching of all kinds of administrative data turns out to be an effective and efficient approach. Thus, the Netherlands had a virtual population census to fulfill its international 2001 obligations, without asking any question. This approach was necessary not in the least because response percentages for social surveys had come to be among the lowest in the western world. Two further strongholds of Dutch official statistics are said to be the use of ICT and the protection of statistical confidentiality. SN was amongst the first National Statistical Institutes to introduce networking, PCs and laptops in its daily operations. We developed Blaise as the computing environment for social survey data collection and processing. Nowadays it is used world-wide as a standard. And likewise Argus, software developed to facilitate the protection of statistical confidentiality, tends to become an international standard.

### **The Need for Reducing the Administrative Burden**

At present there is a strong demand in The Netherlands, as in many countries, to reduce the administrative burden on businesses, and especially small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). By the end of 2005, the share of administrative burden caused by SN was only 0.15% of the total burden. Nevertheless the burden caused by statistics is often felt more sincere by enterprises and therefore statistical obligations receive a lot of attention. The Dutch government aimed at reducing the administrative burden during its period of government by 25%. SN is also committed to achieve such a reduction. We succeeded in realising a reduction of 18% in the period 2002-2005. A further reduction to at least 25% is foreseen before the end of 2006.

Any further reduction of the administrative burden caused by statistics will demand additional measures, both in terms of statistical requirement and in terms of the statistical production process. First, statistical requirements, both at the national and the European level should be reduced. Statistical obligations that count of a rather large share of the burden will need revision. The European regulation for the Intra-EU trade statistics, Intrastat, counts for almost half of the administrative burden caused by statistics. At the level of the EU Council of Ministers initiatives have been launched that might enable a reduction of the burden by 2012 by introducing a 'one flow' reporting system and by simplification of the nomenclature. Nevertheless, a lot of research will need to be done to investigate the feasibility of such measures.

Another set of measures is related to the production process of statistics by making more and better use of data from administrative files and registers. The main challenge the coming years will be to manage the increased use of data from

administrations and registrations. This demands a thorough revision of statistical data processes, both in terms of collecting and processing the data. This process will be supported by a major restructuring of the ICT environment and supporting tools. Main issues will be: standardisation of ICT tools and statistical processes and the implementation of a metadata system.

### Initiatives for new statistics

Whilst there is a need for reducing the administrative burden on businesses, there is on the other hand always a demand for new statistical products which reflect the developments in society. Therefore several so-called strategic projects were initiated with the aim to develop new statistical products. Three examples are given here: the first project *Social dynamics and extended labour accounts* is on providing statistical information on the life course of the population. The project charts changes in people's labour market position by following their careers. Labour market flow data are linked to data on the demographic life course, educational careers and changes in income.

Another project in the area of *Health and care* statistics compiles statistics on the basis of the Health Statistics Database on hospital care, first hospital admissions per diagnosis and mortality following first admission, if required broken down by socio-economic status. In the next few years Statistics Netherlands will compile similar statistics on prenatal care, primary health care, mental health care and care for the elderly. In addition for all health care institutions in the country information on the financial-economic aspects of health care will become available.

The project, *Integrated information on population aging*, aims to provide a complete and consistent picture of the various aspects of population aging in the Netherlands. The primary goal of the project is to develop new statistics on personal pension entitlements. These statistics will ultimately be incorporated as a pension module in the National Accounts.



Each year the staff of Statistics Netherlands can participate in a competition predicting the Dutch economy for the following year. On this photograph: director general Gosse van der Veen (left), Ben van Cleef, the winner of the 'business cycle trophy 2006, and Symon Algera, the initiator of the competition.

### Dissemination

Improving the ways of disseminating statistical results is a point of special interest. Like in most other countries, our statistics are available for free via the SN website. Everyone can access the output database *StatLine*, press releases, and the *Web magazine*. The website and the output database *StatLine* can be accessed independently on the Internet (<http://www.cbs.nl> and <http://statline.cbs.nl> respectively). New information is published simultaneously on the website and in *StatLine*. The website contains ready-made links to the most recent data. Users can also make personalised links so that they always have the latest data at their fingertips.

The *Web magazine* has been published since the summer of 1998 (and in English since 2002). It is published weekly in a fixed format. Each *Web magazine* consists of four or five short articles comprising a few paragraphs of text and two or



three graphs based on the most recent figures. The *Web magazine* certainly seems to be fulfilling a demand, with more than 62 thousand hits (Dutch version) per month and a wide coverage in the press.

At the end of November 2005 the *Business Cycle Tracer* was launched on SN's website. This is an interactive tool to determine the state and course of the Dutch economy on the basis of developments in the 15 main economic indicators. The Business Cycle Tracer has received a lot of positive attention in the international statistical community. The Business Cycle Tracer can be found on our website.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cbs.nl/en-GB/menu/themas/macro-economie-financiele-instellingen/conjunctuurgegevens/publicaties/conjunctuurbericht/klok/default.htm>

The *Centre for Policy Statistics* was set up in 2001 in response to the growing demand for statistical information from ministries, planning agencies and the Dutch parliament. The Centre advises on the possibilities for research and on the data which are or can be made available for these studies. It also carries out analyses on request and compiles statistical overviews with the aid of Statistics Netherlands data. The Centre also hosts the facilities for giving access to micro data for scientific research, such as the pilot for controlled remote access. ([www.cbs.nl/cvb](http://www.cbs.nl/cvb) )

## In Conclusion

This article gives a brief overview of the history and developments in Statistics Netherlands. Many challenges lay ahead in ensuring that SN will succeed in providing high quality statistical information that is relevant to policy and society as whole.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM JSM NOW ON THE WEB!

Did you miss the 2006 ASA Plenary Sessions in Seattle, or do you wish you could hear one or more of these outstanding presentations again? If so, you can view three great plenary sessions on ASA's Web site (<http://www.amstat.org>). The Committee on Statistics and Disability and its many co-sponsors, including GSS, funded this new benefit through the ASA Strategic Initiative Program. It provides access to members with disabilities, international members, State and local government members and to others who were unable to attend the Seattle meetings in person. Nonmembers can also learn more about our meetings. The three presentations are:

- The Presidential Invited Address, *A Data-Driven World: Why Now and What We Can Do About It*, by William Pulleybank, an IBM VP;
- The Deming Lecture, *Making Another World: A Holistic Approach to Performance Improvement*, by Ronald D. Snee, Tunnell Consulting; and,
- The ASA Presidential Address, *From Data to Policy: Scientific Excellence Is Our Future* by Sallie Keller-McNulty, ASA President and Professor of Statistics at Rice University.

A very worthwhile experience!

Individuals wishing more information about this initiative may contact Carolyn Shettle at carolynshettle@westat.com or 301-251-4324.

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## Social Statistics Section

### **STATISTICIANS AND HUMAN RIGHTS<sup>1</sup>**

*By Jana Asher, Science and Human Rights Program, American Association for the Advancement of Science*

At the Joint Statistical Meetings in 2005, in response to the call of then-ASA President Fritz Scheuren, a dedicated group of statisticians launched a Special Interest Group on Statistical Volunteerism. Since then, the group has been actively involved in several *pro-bono* projects, including projects oriented towards the protection and attainment of human rights. What you might not realize is that statisticians affiliated with the American Statistical Association have been working – literally for decades – in pursuit of fundamental human rights, both as employees and also as volunteers.

Perhaps those endeavors interest you as well. For many statisticians, the greatest challenge is figuring out how to help and where to begin. A few ideas follow.

#### **Data Collection & Analysis**

For the adventurous, there are nongovernmental organizations throughout the world that collect and analyze data to help them plan and implement their programs. A taste of the types of projects that statisticians have been involved in can be found on the Social Statistics Section (SSS) Web site at [www.amstat.org/sections/ssoc/SSS\\_Human\\_Rights\\_Papers.pdf](http://www.amstat.org/sections/ssoc/SSS_Human_Rights_Papers.pdf), where Natasha Bivings has collected all of the papers on human rights-related topics from the 1984-2001 *Proceedings of the Social Statistics Section of the American Statistical Association*. Separate stories on human rights projects occasionally have appeared in *Amstat News*, such as Patrick Ball's testimony to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (May 2002), or my own experiences in Iraq in early 2003 (November 2003).

Currently, organizations such as the Human Rights Data Analysis Group at Benetech ([www.hrdag.org](http://www.hrdag.org)) and the Science and Human Rights Program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (<http://shr.aaas.org>) employ full-time statisticians to assist them with their data collection and analysis projects. If you are interested in that type of work as your primary employment, be aware that although the work itself is inherently rewarding, the pay is not as high as it is in industry, academia, or government. More information can be found at the Web sites provided above.

#### **Mentoring**

Perhaps you don't want to work with human rights issues full-time, or you don't have the time or resources to drop everything and head to Darfur to volunteer. That doesn't mean that there isn't a role for you in the human rights world. Many nongovernmental organizations are struggling to collect and analyze meaningful quantitative data to further their advocacy goals. Some of them just need a little qualified advice on what software package(s) to buy, or someone to review a questionnaire or an analysis.

The Rapid Response Development Committee, working under the auspices of the Special Interest Group on Statistical Volunteerism ([www.niss.org/mlast/VolunteerSIG/](http://www.niss.org/mlast/VolunteerSIG/)), is developing a protocol for a network of statisticians who can provide some time and direct assistance to nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations. Although that protocol still is being developed, it is not too early to express your interest in the Rapid Response Network. The Committee is searching for statisticians with a wide variety of skill sets and commitment levels. For more information, please see [www.niss.org/mlast/VolunteerSIG/RR.html](http://www.niss.org/mlast/VolunteerSIG/RR.html).

#### **Advocacy**

Although our role as statisticians is to maintain objectivity during the analysis of data, there are situations where our commitment to humanity is the more important characteristic. One of those situations arises when a colleague's fundamental human rights are being denied – whether via censorship, termination of employment, or a more drastic measure such as torture or imprisonment. The original purpose of the ASA Committee on Scientific Freedom and Human Rights (CSFHR), when established in the early 1980s, was to provide advocacy on behalf of statisticians who were persecuted throughout the world. To accomplish its goals, the CSFHR worked in partnership with the Science and Human Rights Program (SHRP) of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), whose focus was on advocacy for professionals from all fields of science.

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<sup>1</sup> Thank you to Mike Kisielewski and David Banks for reviewing this article.

The CSFHR's mandate has evolved and expanded over time, but no formal advocacy mechanism has been created under the Committee framework. The Science and Human Rights Program, however, formalized its advocacy role in 1983 with the creation of the AAAS Science and Human Rights Action Network (AAASHRAN). AAASHRAN researches claims that particular scientists are being denied their fundamental human rights, and then organizes letter-writing campaigns on behalf of those scientists. Writers can stay informed of new AAASHRAN alerts by subscribing to the AAASHRAN listserv, or by monitoring the AAASHRAN Web site.

Several CSFHR members, former and past, have participated in the AAASHRAN network. And you can too. The AAASHRAN alerts contain all the information necessary to write letters on behalf of persecuted scientists – including a letter-generator. To subscribe to the listserv, visit <http://listserv.aaas.org/mailman/listinfo/aaashran>, and to read about past alerts, visit <http://shr.aaas.org/aaashran>.

## For Students

I first became involved in human rights work as a student at Carnegie Mellon University, through a project for a data analysis class. Students have a unique ability to contribute to human rights work via internships, class work, and summer projects. For example, AAAS is interested in interns for the Fall, Spring, and Summer. More information on that internship program can be found at [www.aaas.org/careercenter/internships/spp-hr.shtml](http://www.aaas.org/careercenter/internships/spp-hr.shtml). Additionally, if you want to begin exploring human rights data as a student for a class project, there are several datasets available for free on the Internet (e.g., see [www.hrdag.org/resources/data\\_software.shtml](http://www.hrdag.org/resources/data_software.shtml)).

To summarize, there are many and varied ways in which statisticians can contribute to the realization of fundamental human rights, both here in the United States and throughout the world. Regardless of your area of expertise, available time, or experience, there is a project waiting for you.

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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. 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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**SOCIAL STATISTICS MEMBERS: 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**
- **Jeanne Griffith Mentoring Award:** Contact: Ed Spar at COPAFS ([copafs@aol.com](mailto:copafs@aol.com))  
**Deadline: April 1, 2007**
- **Roger Herriot Award:** Contact: Dan Weinberg ([daniel.h.weinberg@census.gov](mailto:daniel.h.weinberg@census.gov))  
 Completed packages must be received by **April 1, 2007**
- **Wray Jackson Smith Memorial Award:** Contact: Juanita T. Lott ([juanita.t.lott@census.gov](mailto:juanita.t.lott@census.gov))  
**Deadline: April 15, 2007**

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**CONSIDER ORGANIZING A GSS OR SSS TOPIC CONTRIBUTED SESSION FOR JSM 2007:
 ALSO NEW CHANGES FOR POSTER SESSIONS!**

By Robie Sangster, 2007 GSS Program Chair, and Allen Schirm, 2007 SSS Program Chair

It is time to think about your options for presentations for JSM 2007 in Salt Lake City, July 29 - August 2, 2007 at the Salt Palace Convention Center. We would like to encourage you to think about organizing a topic contributed poster presentation or a topic contributed paper and panel session. **Online submissions begin December 1, 2006, and close on February 1, 2007.**

The first option is to organize a **topic contributed poster presentation**. This year the goal is to change how we think about the poster sessions. Here are some of the new features:

- Posters will remain on display for an entire day, from 8am to 6pm on Monday and Tuesday, and from 8am to 2pm on Wednesday. Poster presenters will be expected to be present at the poster during an assigned 110-minute time slot, but attendees can see the poster at any time during the day.
- Posters will be displayed in a prominent, easy-to-access location, adjacent to the exhibit hall.

- The JSM program will refer to these as poster *presentations* rather than as simply posters, in an effort to emphasize that presenters really do present and not simply prepare their posters, and also to advertise poster presentations as equally prestigious to paper presentations.

The second option is to organize a **topic contributed session (panel or papers)**. This option allows for a themed session and provides more time for the speakers. Topic contributed sessions tend to be well attended since they focus on a single or a set of related topics. It is also a great way to meet people working in an area of interest to you. The instructions for topic contributed sessions are listed below.

Please let us know if we can be of any help (Sangster_R@bls.gov, Phone: 202-691-7517); aschirm@mathematica-mpr.com, Phone: 202-484-4686).

TOPIC-CONTRIBUTED SESSIONS

TOPIC-CONTRIBUTED PAPER SESSIONS: These sessions consist of a collection of contributed talks and discussions (if desired) that share a common topic. The sessions are **110 minutes in length**.

There must be **five presentations (including discussants)** of 20 minutes each, with 10 minutes at the end for floor discussion and concluding remarks by the session chair. There are three (3) format options for a Topic-Contributed paper session:

- a) Five (5) papers
- b) Four (4) papers and one (1) discussant
- c) Three (3) papers and two (2) discussants

All speakers in a Topic-Contributed paper session **MUST** pre-register and submit an abstract to the ASA office by **February 1, 2007**. On the abstract form, speakers should indicate that they are speaking in a Topic-Contributed session and give the name of the session organizer. In addition, speakers must submit a draft manuscript by **May 10, 2007**, or risk being removed from the program.

IMPORTANT NOTE: In the past, a few Sections have organized some Topic-Contributed sessions after the February 1 deadline using Regular Contributed submissions. The JSM now actively discourages this practice, which will be allowed only under extraordinary circumstances (e.g., to fill out a proposed Topic-Contributed session that is missing only one required paper or discussant). Consequently, it is essential for Sections to encourage their members to begin organizing Topic-Contributed sessions well before the **February 1, 2007**, deadline.

TOPIC-CONTRIBUTED PANEL SESSIONS: These sessions are **110 minutes in length**. The traditional panel discussion format is used, wherein a **minimum of three and a maximum of five panelists** provide commentary on a particular topic. Panels require **ONE ABSTRACT** to be submitted by the organizer by **February 1, 2007**. All panelists must be registered first in order to be added to the abstract. All panelists will be listed as presenting and corresponding authors. As with any Topic-Contributed session, the Topic-Contributed panel organizer must coordinate efforts through the appropriate JSM Program Committee member.

TOPIC-CONTRIBUTED POSTERS: Effective since JSM 2003, Contributed poster sessions may include *Topic-Contributed poster clusters*. A Topic-Contributed poster cluster will contain approximately three to six posters on a given topic, with roughly the same degree of intellectual cohesion as is expected of a Topic-Contributed paper session. Either application, methodological, or theoretical themes may define the topics for a given cluster. Examples include:

- Analysis of Phase III Clinical Trials
- Seasonal Adjustment of Economic Time Series
- Analysis of Point Source Pollution Data
- CUSUM Charts
- Sequential Analysis
- Application of MCMC Methods to the Analysis of Complex Survey Data
- Calibration and Related Inverse Problems
- Empirical Processes

Topic-Contributed poster clusters can provide a nice format in which several colleagues can present different perspectives on a statistical controversy, or can present side-by-side analyses of an especially challenging dataset. The posters within a cluster will be presented at the same time. Organization and submission of a Topic-Contributed poster cluster will follow the same pattern and timeline as used for a Topic-Contributed paper session.

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## **JOB ANNOUNCEMENT: NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION**

**CHIEF STATISTICIAN, AD-5/1529.** Annual salary ranges from \$129,026 to \$152,000.

The position is excluded from the bargaining unit. Permanent positions apply under NSF Announcement Number E20070026. One or two year visiting scientist appointments, Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) assignments, or federal temporary appointments apply under NSF Announcement Number E20070027-Rotator.

[http://www.nsf.gov/about/career\\_opps/vacancies/scientific.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/about/career_opps/vacancies/scientific.jsp)

The Division of Science Resources Statistics (SRS) in the National Science Foundation (NSF) is one of the fourteen (14) major statistical agencies within the federal government. The primary objective of SRS is to develop statistical and analytical information on the U.S. science and engineering enterprise. The Chief Statistician provides statistical guidance and leadership to SRS staff in the areas of survey design and redesign, survey methodology, and mathematical statistics and is the Confidentiality Officer for SRS.

**Closing date: January 29, 2007**

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THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ESTABLISHMENT SURVEYS (ICES-III)*

The Third International Conference on Establishment Surveys (ICES-III) will be held in Montréal, Québec, Canada, June 18-21, 2007. ICES-III will explore the current state of the art in survey methodology. In 1993, ICES-I brought together more than 400 survey experts in the areas of businesses, farms, and institutions. ICES-II, in 2000, took a forward look at survey methods.

The conference will include:

- A selection of invited, topic-contributed, and contributed sessions
- Short courses on June 18
- A keynote speaker and reception on the evening of June 18
- Poster sessions and software demonstrations
- A closing dinner with a panel presentation on the evening of June 21

Approximately 500 participants are expected. Following the conference, a collection of conference papers on CD-ROM will be sent to all participants.

Conference activities will be held at the Hyatt Regency Montréal. The Hyatt Regency Montréal web site is <http://montreal.hyatt.com>. (Hotel reservations can be made starting on March 1, 2007.)

For further information, please send an email message to ices3@census.gov. The official language of the conference is English. Translators will not be provided.

***CALL FOR ICES-III SESSION CHAIRS:**

In order to encourage global participation in the upcoming Third International Conference on Establishment Surveys (ICES-3), the Program Committee requests volunteers to serve as session chairs.

A session chair is responsible for running a contributed paper session, introducing presenters, and ensuring that the session stays on schedule by monitoring the timing of each presentation. In addition, the session chair should also serve as the moderator for the question and answer period of each session, engaging participation and encouraging discussion. The session chair may also assist with coordinating presentation slides and materials, if needed.

Please volunteer by e-mailing the Program Committee at ICES3@census.gov by Wednesday, December 20, 2006. Preference in assignments will be given to volunteers who are not participating elsewhere on the ICES-3 program.

Thank you. On behalf of the ICES-III Program Committee,
Frank Yu
Australian Bureau of Statistics

Diane Willimack
U.S. Census Bureau

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**SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE EUROPEAN SURVEY RESEARCH ASSOCIATION**

The European Survey Research Association (ESRA) has been established to provide coordination in the field of survey research in Europe. Through its activities ESRA encourages communication among substantive researchers, methodologists, and statisticians working in the field of survey research.

The first conference was held in Barcelona in 2005; more than 300 people from many different countries participated in this event. This year ESRA is pleased to announce the

**Second Conference of The European Survey Research Association**

to be held June 25-29, 2007 in Prague, Czech Republic.

A large variety of topics will be discussed, among which are sampling, nonresponse, measurement of social science concepts, evaluation of survey quality, cross-cultural research, research designs, analysis of survey data, missing data, data collection, mode effects in surveys, etc.

ESRA welcomes suggestions for sessions; please send your suggestion(s) with a short description to [esra@sqp.nl](mailto:esra@sqp.nl).

If you are interested in presenting a paper at the conference, please send your proposal to [esra@sqp.nl](mailto:esra@sqp.nl). Include the name, email address, and affiliations of all the authors, the name of the person who will be presenting the paper, the title of the presentation, and an abstract of around 250 (max. 500) words. If possible, please suggest a session or topic to which you think your paper belongs.

Further information about ESRA, the 2007 conference, and the new journal *Survey Research Methods* can be found on the ESRA website <http://esra.sqp.nl/>.

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Government Statistics Section Mission Statement

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 Mission Statement**

*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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