

THE BRIEFING

The Newsletter of the INFORMS Section on Public Programs, Service, and Needs (SPPSN)
Volume 1, No. 1 • October 2009

Welcome from the President

President John Hall welcomes you to the new Section, formed from the merger of the older INFORMS Public Programs and Processes Section and two major member initiatives to expand INFORMS' coverage of humanitarian response and community service. John takes a look back at the history of SPPSN and its predecessors, and looks ahead to where we are headed in the future.

SPPSN at the 2009 INFORMS National Meeting

Preview SPPSN's ten sessions and business meeting at the 2009 National Meeting in San Diego.

Additional Clusters on Public Programs, Public Service, and Public Needs

Learn about several other presentation clusters of interest to SPPSN, in the areas of Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, OR/MS with Societal and Humanitarian Impact, and the Doing Good with Good OR Student Competition. 24 sessions in all.

INFORMS Rejected by the Office of Management and Budget – Now What?

INFORMS sent a letter to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), asking that operations researchers be added to the Obama Administration's recently announced efforts to improve governance performance. The OMB's official response to INFORMS simply thanked the organization for its interest and governance performance, and a follow-up call confirmed that OMB executives decided on a "neutral" response to the profession. What does this mean, and where do we go from here? SPPSN members comment.

Notices for the Good of the Section

Call for manuscripts for an upcoming Springer volume on Community-Based Operations Research.

About SPPSN

Information about the new section, its current officers, and how to contact us.

Welcome from the President

“Looking Back to Look Forward: The Public Programs and Processes Section of INFORMS”

John Hall, President of SPSPN

In the fall of 2008, I delivered a presentation to the Washington, DC, INFORMS conference on the subject of the past sessions and areas of emphasis of the INFORMS Public Programs and Processes Section (PPPS). The invitation to speak came from the very large and very active informal community on Humanitarian Applications. That gave me a reason to emphasize PPPS's long-standing interest in humanitarian applications. Another reason was that we were then engaged in a year-long process to bring our two communities together, along with CORPS, the new community on operations research and public service, in a larger, stronger, merged section.

My research on the areas of emphasis of PPPS proved to be good background for the merger discussions and the new section launch. Evidence of overlap and complementarity with our prospective partners were everywhere in the historic record. I came away more convinced than ever that we were on the right side of history in making this change. Now I want to show those of you who could not attend the DC session what I found.

Start With the Math

Long before the INFORMS leadership came up with the nifty “Science of Better” slogan for our field, I was trying to explain OR/MS to cocktail party acquaintances as the mathematics of better decision-making. Each class of decisions and each type of decision-maker needs a different type of mathematics. Over the decades PPPS has spent time on several OR tools that offered the promise of providing such improvements:

- Program evaluation methods
- Performance measurement techniques
- Regulatory administration options
- Assessing the impact of federal mandates on state and local governments
- Data envelopment analysis (DEA), typically as applied to input/output models on relative efficiency

- Fiscal impact and other fiscal analysis tools, including finance, revenue, and demand forecasting for government programs at all levels
- Decision support systems and information systems
- Expert systems and artificial intelligence
- Crisis simulation
- Uses of GIS in land development, commuter route selection, etc.
- Uses of information by public sector managers

If you are as quick-witted as I know you all are, you can already see how many of these types of analytical tools, which PPPS focused on because of their potential usefulness to public-sector programs, would be just as useful to private non-profit and volunteer organizations seeking to address the same public needs. Program evaluation methods apply to any program with a mission and associated objectives. Humanitarian, public service, and other programs typically take place over dispersed delivery areas, where GIS and related technologies have made data-informed decision-making in real time that we could have only imagined when I was in graduate school. And crises – with the associated need to simulate them, understand them, prevent them and mitigate them – are the common currency of all the clients and constituents our different communities seek to serve and support with OR/MS skills and knowledge.

Public Safety

Public safety applications of OR/MS have been one of the most reliable focus areas of PPPS as well as being by far the most visible and most honored. Innovative work on unit deployment and emergency response by police and fire departments have earned people like Warren Walker, Ed Ignall, Arthur Swersey, Dick Larson (and I know I will inadvertently slight by omission

many more) every major prize INFORMS offers. Ken Chelst's work on departmental mergers and Al Blumstein's work on criminal careers have caught the attention of public managers across the country as well as the interest of numerous kindred fields. I have spent nearly my entire career focused on management issues of the fire service and the humanitarian goal of reducing the burden of unwanted fire on people, property and the quality of life (to paraphrase the mission statement of the National Fire Protection Association), so perhaps I can be forgiven for taking particular interest and pride in the accomplishments of OR/MS in general and PPPS members in particular in this arena. But let me just toss out some other examples:

- Crisis management
- Forest fire response
- Simulating the process from arrest to arraignment
- Simulating the management of courts
- Anything and everything about homeland security

Risks to Life and Limb

For a second focus area, I borrow from the umbrella title Arnie Barnett has used over the years for the diverse group of presentations his sessions have captured. As I list some of the specific topics we have addressed under this heading, note again how good the match is not only with public programs but also with humanitarian applications, public needs, and public service:

- Quantifying economic value per injury avoided (essential to making the cost-benefit case for programs and regulations)
- Earthquake forecasting
- Technological hazards, including risk perception
- Regulated industries, including risk quantification
- Airline safety
- AIDS/HIV and blood banks
- Controls on illicit drugs, including studies of smuggling, street-level distribution identification, and estimates of the at-risk and user populations
- All of which nicely segue into issues of public health care, where our studies of admissions processes, quality of care,

mass screenings, spatial patterns of need, resource location and allocation, facility support systems, and efficiency and other audits.

Shared Interests with Other INFORMS Communities

Historically, we have been more interested and more active in the health side of public programs (like those topics listed above) than the Health Applications Society has been in the public side of health programs.

In the same way, the existence of a thriving and healthy Transportation Applications Society (and several more specialized communities, devoted to particular types of transportation) has not given us much competition for work on public transportation and related infrastructure. Here is a sampling of transportation subjects you could hear about from us if you were around at the right time:

- Pothole fixing
- Smart traffic lights
- Tampering with motor vehicle emission control equipment
- Automobile fuel efficiency regulation
- On-time ratings for airlines

And the Kitchen Sink

If the above collection of diverse interests does not yet give you a sense of the breadth of PPPS – and a preview of the even greater breadth of the new Section on Public Programs, Service and Needs (SPPSN) – then I will just have to load you down with this sampling of ever more exotic and unique areas of activity:

- Toxic substance controls
- Locating obnoxious facilities
- Measuring obsolescence
- Garbage barge dispatching
- Strategies related to acid rain, oil spills, groundwater contamination and nuclear waste
- Elections and voting
- Postal service management
- Gambling regulation
- Decisions related to breaking up monopolies

- Military retention and related human resource issues of public agencies
- Public employee turnover
- Libraries
- Economic development
- Housing policy

Closing Thoughts

Whew! I would like to close with some thoughts on what all this means to you.

If you are attracted to OR/MS theoretical developments and/or applications that are about alleviating human misery, meeting fundamental needs, or pursuing missions of doing good with good O.R. (to borrow from Cindy Barnhart's superb phrase), then you will find SPSSN to be a welcoming home for like-minded souls in our shared endeavors and toward our shared purposes.

If you are looking to build an OR career or a network of colleagues or to add experts or reviewers in a little pocket of OR/MS where it seems that you are the only one interested in the subject, then look closely to see whether your pet area of specialization might fit comfortably under

the SPSSN umbrella. You might even find that the authors of those one or two papers that came before your work are still hanging around, doing good stuff, at the SPSSN club.

If you have OR/MS skills, but you aren't sure how you want to use them, consider SPSSN. There is nothing quite like the feeling you get when you improve people's lives by using your special intellectual gifts in a way that no one else could have done.

And you'll find that it takes away a lot of the pressure of explaining OR/MS at those cocktail parties. Everyone understands serving humanity and making the world a better place. They'll accept that they may never understand what you do or how you are making a difference. But the doubts will be resolved in your favor if you can point to a child saved or a home saved or a job saved – or a taxpayer dollar saved. We do that every day.

Read over this highlighted history of what we were. Then come join the party at SPSSN. We reserved a place just for you.

SPSSN at the 2009 INFORMS National Meeting

John Hollywood, SPSSN Vice President of Communications

This year's INFORMS National Meeting will be held at the San Diego Convention Center from October 11-14. The theme is "INFORMing the Globe". The section's business meeting will be held Sunday, October 11, from 6:15 – 7:15 pm in the Hilton's Sapphire K room on the 4th floor.

In its first year, SPSSN has assembled ten sessions at the INFORMS National Meeting on topics ranging from homeland security to litigation support. The table on the next page shows the session title, time, and highlights. We hope to see you in San Diego!

Session	Time	Highlights
Sunday, October 11		
1. Threats to Life and Limb	11:00 am	The ever popular (and self-explanatory) session. Topics this year include redemption from past criminal histories, ER delays and their consequences for stroke victims, cross-national differences in aviation safety records, and modeling the spread of the 2009-H1N1 virus.
Monday, October 12		
2. Training Technologies for Emergency Preparedness	4:30 pm	Presentations include demonstrations of sand table and simulation table training methods for emergency preparedness.
Tuesday, October 13		
3. Joint Session with Location Analysis	8:00 am	Presentations include an analysis of residence requirement strategies for sex offenders; food bank distribution; the effects of partnerships between local public health agencies; and a discussion of how housing and community development organizations can improve their operations with spreadsheet-based management science applications.
4. Working with Non-Profit Organizations	1:30 pm	Presentations focus on improving food distribution supply chains, including examinations of routing problems for food banks, supply chain optimization for the World Food Programme, disaster response logistics models that can work with the limited data likely to be present during a disaster response, and models for foreclosed housing acquisition and redevelopment.
5. Energy, Environment, and Sustainability	4:30 pm	Presentations focus on reducing the environmental impact of logistics operations, including studies of railway ethanol shipping, impacts of packaging choices, and the advantages of product recovery activities. Also includes a presentation on the use of advanced computational methods to foster sustainable development
Wednesday, October 14		
6. Operations Research Applications for Elections	8:00 am	A variety of presentations on elections applications, including a review of a model that predicted the results of the 2008 Presidential Election; a model for determining the optimal platform of a 3 rd party Presidential candidate; new measures of manipulability of anonymous voting rules; and approaches for providing equity in elections, as defined by having voters face roughly equivalent waiting times.
7. Treating Emergency Patients	11:00 am	Presentations include a study of optimal control policies for emergency rooms; improved statistical methods for estimating 911 call arrival rates and travel times; a model for estimating the effects of repositioning EMS assets; a review of fire department needs for EMS resources; and a method for evaluating emergency response times based on patient survival rates.
8. Modeling Mass Egress and Evacuations	12:45 pm	Presentations include a discussion of the Secret Service's evacuation planning tool and a discussion of challenges in using agent-based simulations to model mass egress.
9. OR and Litigation Support	2:45 pm	Presentations include the use of OR to inform the findings of Truth and Reconciliation commissions and an analysis of the impacts of expert witness testimony.
10. Detections and Deterrence	4:30 pm	Presentations include a model for allocating resources to deter a terrorist attack; a study of how US terrorist plots have really been foiled; and new mathematical formulations of risk, the probability of deterrence, and the benefits of deterrence.

Additional Clusters on Public Programs, Public Service, and Public Needs

The 2009 National Meeting features several invited clusters that may be of interest to SPSPN members.

- The invited cluster on **OR/MS with Societal/ Humanitarian Impact**, co-chaired by Ozlem Ergun, Pinar Keskinocak, and Julie Swann, features 13 exciting sessions with topics ranging from evacuation during a disaster and evaluating the interaction emergency forecasting versus emergency response systems to decision-making about when a non-governmental organization should accept particular donations and facility location for humanitarian response. Some of these sessions are jointly organized and co-sponsored by the Transportation Science and Logistics Society.
- The invited cluster on **Doing Good with Good OR Student Competition**, co-chaired by Ozlem Ergun and Cynthia Barnhart, is an INFORMS sponsored competition to encouraging student research and practice with societal impact. This competition is intended to recognize student-led projects with real-world clients that generate significant societal impacts beyond increased profits or reduced costs. The two finalist sessions will feature the most exciting work performed by students in partnership with public and private organizations that results in tangible, beneficial outcomes for individuals, communities and organizations. The winner of the competition will be decided after the presentations and announced at the awards ceremony on Sunday night.
- The invited cluster on **Homeland Security and Counterinsurgency**, co-chaired by Moshe Kress and Roberto Szechtman, features eight sessions on topics including port and border security, biodefense, infrastructure protection, and targeting terrorist and insurgent organizations.

INFORMS Rejected by the Office of Management and Budget – Now What?

Letter from INFORMS to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

On January 16, 2009, INFORMS sent the following letter to Peter Orszag, Director of the Office of Management and Budget. We would like to thank Barry List for agreeing to share this letter with us as well as the response from OMB.

Dr. Peter R. Orszag
Director
The Office of Management and Budget 725 17th
Street, NW Washington, DC 20503

Dear Dr. Orszag,
I'm writing at the recommendation of Dr. Martin Apple of the Council of Scientific Society

Presidents, who spoke with our professional society after meetings with the Obama Transition Team. We urge you to consider the high importance of appointing operations researchers to assist the Obama Administration in the improvement of performance in government.

Operations researchers apply advanced analytical methods to help make better decisions. We are uniquely positioned to assist with problems in resource allocation, budgeting, and policy as America grapples with the current economic crisis. Our members specialize in modeling and analyzing systems, identifying the decision processes, and evaluating the impact of possible decisions, including those involving the use of scarce resources.

Because operations research (O.R.) is applied across numerous fields and industries, it can augment the analysis being done for every sector of the federal government. Among the current problems that operations researchers can address are determining:

1. the best allocation of infrastructure investment funds
2. efficient approaches for healthcare delivery to reduce costs and improve quality of service
3. ways to transform the transportation industry so that America achieves its economic goals while reducing its dependence on oil.

Options

Operations researchers could serve the American people in one or more ways:

1. Teams of operations researchers could work within federal departments and agencies
 2. Operations researchers could report directly to the White House. If a Performance Czar is appointed, operations researchers could report to her/him.
 3. Operations researchers could report to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget
- In previous correspondence with the Obama Transition Team, INFORMS discussed the idea of providing every federal agency and department with sustained access to operations researchers as part of analysis teams.

We suggested that, as data will prove to be a key element in any analysis, consideration be given to establishing cross-agency data standards and repositories, models, and analysis methodologies. We noted that in industry, analysis teams typically are led by a seasoned analyst with significant management and domain expertise, and include both experienced analysts, junior analysts, and support software developers. These teams typically execute several projects each year, with each project including a framing phase, a data gathering phase, an analysis phase, a recommendations phase, and a monitoring phase.

Operations research is an interdisciplinary approach. Operations research teams can work with statisticians, economists, and other quantitative experts who can be identified in cooperation with the Council of Scientific Society Presidents.

INFORMS' Role

INFORMS is prepared to assist the federal government in the identification of qualified operations research job applicants as well as consultant teams. The association would be happy to submit a list of potential participants in this highly important endeavor. The association can also assist in preparing job descriptions, identifying a process for selecting and hiring operations researchers and other quantitative personnel, and identifying active operations researchers who are already government employees. Throughout, INFORMS can serve in a significant advisory role.

Background

The Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS®) www.informs.org is a scientific society with 10,000 members, including Nobel Prize laureates in Economics, dedicated to applying the scientific methods to help improve decision-making, management, and operations. Members of INFORMS work in business, government, and academia. Our members are represented in fields as diverse as the military, manufacturing, transportation, health care, law enforcement, financial engineering, and telecommunications.

The INFORMS Board of Directors includes:

- President (2009): Dr. Don N. Kleinmuntz, Strata Decision Technology, LLC. University of Southern California, Los Angeles Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events.
- Past President (2009): Professor Cynthia Barnhart, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Civil and Environmental Engineering and Engineering Systems School of Engineering Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Co-director, Operations Research Center.
- President-Elect (2009): Professor Susan Albin, Graduate Director, Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, Rutgers University.
- Executive Director: Mark Doherty.

INFORMS Former President (2007) Dr. Brenda Dietrich, IBM T. J. Watson Research Center, IBM Fellow and Vice President, Business Analytics and

Mathematical Sciences, is an active member of the association with strong interest in public affairs and the work of operations researchers in government.

Operations Research

Operations research is the application of advanced analytical methods to help make better decisions. Operations researchers use a variety of research tools. We rely especially on framing challenging problems so that they can be analyzed with available data, then mathematically modeling possible solutions to these problems. The discipline began during World War II and burgeoned in the post-war years.

Examples

There are numerous examples of operations research making an impact on policy problems in government and industry.

- **Healthcare:** Operations researchers helped create diagnostic related groups (DRGs) for budgeting, cost control, and quality control in hospitals. In the 1980s, Medicare began using DRGs as a basis for a prospective payment system. Writing in the early 1990s, a Yale researcher estimated that the system resulted in savings to taxpayers of \$50 billion in Medicare hospital payments.
- **Defense:** At the height of Iraqi hostilities the U.S. Air Force, faced with lengthy repair periods for the gigantic C-5 transports that are used to move materiel to American forces, used O.R. to reduce the number of aircraft undergoing repair from 12 to 7 in just eight months. The repair time declined by a third. The additional aircraft generated immediate additional revenue of \$49.8 million per year. Replacement value for these aircraft is \$2.37 billion. Significantly, employing O.R. and related disciplines represented an important paradigm shift in the U.S. Air Force's efforts to act efficiently.
- **Information Technology:** At IBM, the widespread application of O.R. studies, models, and software has resulted in significant performance improvements and cost savings to multiple IBM organizations, such as the Technology

Group, the Personal Systems Group, the Server Group, and Global Services. Operations research at IBM has evolved to a core competence, used on a continuous basis to address numerous strategic and tactical problems.

- **Manufacturing:** In the 1990s, Procter & Gamble streamlined work processes, drove out non-value-added costs, and eliminated duplication. P&G's use of operations research led to savings of more than \$200 million.
- **Procurement:** Motorola took an innovative approach to streamlining the supplier negotiation process. The company drastically reduce the cost of direct and indirect materials purchased through innovative bidding, online negotiations, and scenario-based analysis. This resulted in savings exceeding \$600 million, and served as a catalyst for moving Motorola from loosely coordinated efforts by individual company sectors to conducting joint global negotiations.
- **Logistics:** UPS has used operations research to structure its organization of 360,000 people, 1,800 facilities, 90,000 vehicles, and 580 aircraft, and to facilitate the daily decisions that guarantee the prompt delivery of 10 million parcels a day. Managerial decision-making at UPS is linked with operations research methodologies, which are used not just by O.R. staff, but by every manager.

Note: Operations research can help immediately with –

- **Resource allocation:** To assure that the proposed economic stimulation package proposed by President Obama is successful, operations researchers can provide resource allocation analysis that considers not only the costs and benefits of any initiative but also how these projects relate to all other projects. This analysis would evaluate the opportunity costs associated with the funding and how these projects interact throughout the entire 'portfolio.'

Resource allocation analysis will be critical to the Administration infrastructure

initiative. Every state has numerous infrastructure projects that have not been funded and officials will be clamoring for funds to get these done. Operations researchers can help the Obama Administration determine which projects are likely to (a) significantly improve the overall infrastructure of the country, (b) employ and train the workforce, and (c) revitalize our economy. An example of the boosted decision-making using O.R.: repairing a crumbling bridge might impact only one goal while building high-speed rail, developing clean sustainable energy, or expanding broadband throughout the country might impact all three goals simultaneously. Operations researchers can help identify these tradeoffs and choose the optimal decision.

- Government efficiency: The federal government will be tasked with changing day-to-day operations such as (a) modernizing the health industry through IT infrastructure, (b) improving procurement through web-based bidding systems, (c) modernizing air traffic control through new instrumentation and warning systems, and (d) using web-based approaches to improve math and science instruction. Each suggested activity has a comparable problem in the private sector that was solved in the private sector. Operations researchers can apply precedent, helping the federal government identify areas that will provide quick successes.

Contact Information

Information about INFORMS and operations research is online at www.informs.org and www.scienceofbetter.org.

Contact information is:

INFORMS Executive Director Mark Doherty,
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INFORMS Director of Communications Barry List,
443-757-3560, 443-794-5182 (cell),
barry.list@informs.org.

I hope that INFORMS has provided you with information that will help the Obama Administration tackle the serious challenges that lie ahead. Don't hesitate to contact me so that INFORMS can provide rapid assistance.

Yours truly,
Barry List
INFORMS Director of Communications

Response from the Office of Management and Budget

INFORMS received the following response back from the Office of Management and Budget:

Dear Mr. List:

Thank you for your thoughtful letter about the potential roles operations researchers could play in addressing management and budget issues in the Federal Government. As we develop our approaches to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Government, we need to consider the kinds of skills and talent, like those of operations research professionals, that are needed to implement and advance our initiatives.

The President is creating a focused team within the White House that will work with agency leaders and the Office of Management and Budget to improve results and outcomes for Federal Government programs while eliminating waste and inefficiency. This unit will be composed of top-performing and highly-trained Government professionals who will work with Federal agencies to set tough performance targets and hold managers for progress. The President will meet regularly with cabinet officers to review the progress their agencies are making toward meeting performance improvement targets.

Thank you for your letter. Sincerely,

Peter R. Orszag, Director.

Follow-on discussion with OMB staff indicated that OMB executives specifically decided on a "neutral" response to INFORMS.

Commentary

Combined with recent articles in ORMS Today noting recent declines in the number of members in INFORMS, this has naturally led SPPSN officers to ask: what now? Some initial thoughts follow. We invite our members to contribute their thoughts on this topic, as well; send your comments to jshollyw@alum.mit.edu.

Commentary from John Hollywood, SPPSN Vice President of Communications:

Some quick thoughts on having operations researchers involved with “the improvement of performance in government”: I work for RTI International (aka the Research Triangle Institute), the nation’s second largest non-profit research institution, second only to Battelle. We have close to 3000 employees. One of RTI’s principal research areas is evaluating and improving the performance of government policies and programs. To this end, we have hundreds of statisticians, survey specialists, behavioral scientists (psychologists, sociologists, criminologists, etc.), economists, and so on.

I have been told I am one of two operations researchers in all of RTI. I have also been told that RTI used to have an OR program, but it was shut down some years ago and there is little living memory of what happened. The other scientist with an OR degree works in an entirely different division, so I don’t know about what they do. In my case, in the area of performance evaluation and improvement, I have worked on the following:

- Data mining, both segmentation analysis to divide programs into attribute and performance categories, and classification and regression analysis to build models of performance to assess how a program performs with respect to expectations.
- Design of performance measurement instruments, including “report cards” for programs and survey questions
- Qualitative analysis, which includes rigorous setup and analysis of interviews, focus groups, site visits, and free-text responses on surveys.

- Continuous quality improvement training and initiatives.
- Social network analysis; we focus on the impact of collaboration on performance, so it’s a bit different than traditional “who is most central?” SNA.
- While I have not worked on it yet, my understanding is that cost-benefit analysis is making a significant comeback in government-wide attempts to do more with less. As mentioned, we have a large number of economists who work on various types of cost and economic impact models.

I would submit that all of these fall well within the OR discipline, and have seen presentations at INFORMS conferences on most of them (with the possible exception of qualitative analysis). That said, for the most part these are outside of the OR mathematical mainstream; I have occasionally seen relevant papers in OR on them, but not often. They are not part of the optimization and probabilistic modeling “cores”.

Thus, while I welcome INFORMS’ interest in getting involved in government performance, and think much good could be done, I think that to be effective in this area, INFORMS needs to support research into, and publication of, those OR approaches that are most directly relevant to performance evaluation and improvement. Exhibit A is the recent “soft OR” controversy that played out on the pages of *ORMS Today* (April 2009). I have issues with the soft OR proponents’ presentation; notably I did not understand why they were being hostile to mathematics, when some of the described approaches require significant computation. Nonetheless, the structured decision-making approaches described are quite relevant to governmental decision-making involving multiple stakeholders. I thought the official response from *Operations Research* – “when they are not based on rigorous mathematical models, *Operations Research* is not the appropriate outlet” – does not bode well if the organization really wants to get more involved in governmental decision-making.

Notices for the Good of the Section

Call for Submissions for a Springer Handbook on Community-Based Operations Research

Submitted by Michael Johnson

Proposals for manuscripts on the topic of Community-Based Operations Research are being solicited for an edited volume to be published in the Springer International Series in Operations Research and Management Science, as part of the Advancing the State-of-the-Art handbook series.

"Community-based operations research" (CBOR) is defined as the collection of analytical methods in the decision sciences in which the focus is placed on problems located in localized jurisdictions, formal or informal, and, in addition, interests of underrepresented, underserved, or vulnerable populations may receive special emphasis. CBOR is intended to propose solutions that improve social welfare through optimization of objectives that may address concerns such as such as economic efficiency, social equity, and administrative burdens. This domain was first discussed in a chapter in *Tutorials in Operations Research 2007 - OR Tools and Applications: Glimpses of Future Technologies* (INFORMS 2007) by Johnson and Smilowitz and subsequently in an article that appeared in the February 2008 issue of *OR/MS Today*."

As community-oriented operations research, as defined here, is central to the mission of the Section on OR/MS Applied to Public Programs,

Service and Needs, submissions from SPPSN members will be especially welcome.

Chapters in this volume can describe current results for a specific research problem, a literature review, or a discussion of the nature of CBOR within the operations research/management science discipline.

Proposals for submissions to this volume should be not more than one page in length, describe the nature of the submission, and clarify if the submission is likely to be based on current or on-going research, a new research project, or synthesize previous findings. Submissions will be peer-reviewed. The deadline for submission proposals is October 16, 2009. The deadline for chapter submissions is February 1, 2010; final drafts of chapter submissions will be sent to the publisher on August 1, 2010.

Manuscript proposals, as well as inquiries regarding further details, should be sent to:

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About the INFORMS Section on Public Programs, Services and Needs

The Section for Public Programs, Service, and Needs (SPPSN) is the INFORMS subdivision dedicated to, in the words of the INFORMS slogan, “doing good with good OR.” The section furthers the use of operations research and management science in the following areas:

- *Public Policy* – improving governmental decision-making at the legislative and strategic levels.
- *Public Programs* – improving the management of government programs, services and operations.
- *Public Safety* – improving decision-making in support of homeland security, law enforcement, emergency preparedness, and disaster response.
- *Public Service* – supporting community development and public service organizations, and encouraging members of the ORMS professions to volunteer their know-how in public service causes.
- *Public Needs* – Improving logistics and other national and international programs to address humanitarian needs.

The section carries out its mission by sponsoring presentations at INFORMS national meetings and providing publicity for ORMS conducted in the public and civic spheres.

SPPSN was formed from a 2009 merger of three efforts devoted to “doing good with good OR”. The first was the Public Programs and Processes Section (PPPS), which was the INFORMS section devoted to OR conducted in the areas of public policy, public programs and public safety. The second was an initiative to start an INFORMS forum devoted to community operations research and the third was an initiative to start an INFORMS forum devoted to supporting humanitarian assistance. The three groups, in consultation with the INFORMS Subdivision

Council, decided that the best approach was to have a single expanded section that would broadly address ORMS conducted in the public and civic spheres.

2009 Officers:

- *President:* John Hall, National Fire Protection Association, jhall@nfpa.org
- *President-Elect:* Pinar Keskinocak, Georgia Institute of Technology, pinar@isye.gatech.edu
- *Secretary/Treasurer:* Michael Johnson, University of Massachusetts at Boston, Michael.Johnson@umb.edu
- *Senior Vice President of Programs:* Julie Swann, Georgia Institute of Technology, jswann@isye.gatech.edu
- *Junior Vice President of Programs:* Mike Racer, University of Memphis, mracer@memphis.edu
- *Vice President of Communications:* John Hollywood, Research Triangle Institute, jhollywood@rti.org
- *Ad Hoc Committee on the 2009 San Diego National Meeting:* Julie Swann (chair), Mike Racer, Doug Samuelson

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Sessions and Presentations at the 2009 INFORMS National Meeting

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