



# NEWS RELEASE

USDA FOREST SERVICE • FOREST PRODUCTS LABORATORY

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Madison, Wis - Outstanding contributions by Federal employees in the Madison area will be recognized at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Awards Banquet sponsored by The Greater Madison Federal Agency Association (GMFAA) on Public Service Recognition Day (May 3). This year the association will also be celebrating Asian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month by having Akira R. Toki as the guest speaker for the banquet and by displaying artwork provided by the Chinese Fine Art Association.

Toki, for whom the Akira R. Toki Middle School in Madison is named, will speak about the experiences he has encountered in the past 84 years. He will discuss being a part of the only Japanese-American family in Madison during World War II and of his enlistment in the U.S. Army, where he was awarded a Purple Heart and Bronze Star for being wounded and meritorious achievement. In addition to being the speaker, Mr. Toki will be receiving the "Distinguished Citizen Award".

The "Distinguished Contributions to the Youth of Wisconsin" award will be presented to the Ropes Program, Wisconsin National Guard Drug Control Program, which has contributed significantly to the youth by providing Outdoor and Mobile Ropes Challenge courses throughout the state. By providing a positive atmosphere for grade 6-12 youth the process has focused on improving self-confidence, decision-making abilities and ability to counter negative influences such as drugs, alcohol, gangs, and violence. The Ropes coordinator is WO1 Trish Murray and her team consists of: WO1 Angela Joseph, SPC Chad Brownell, SSgt Telvin Gross, SSgt Heidi Burks, SSgt Rob VanLanen and SPC Brian Blahnik. This award will also be given to the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, I-I Staff, Company G, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 24<sup>th</sup> Marines, U.S. Department of Defense for the Toys for Tots Program. Over the past 50 years the Marines have distributed over 231 million toys to 116 million needy children throughout the United States.

Peers and supervisors have nominated Federal employees in six different award categories. They are: Community Service, Customer Service, Effectiveness and Economy in Government, Partnership/Teamwork, Equal Employment Opportunity/Diversity and Promoting Government Image.

The **Community Service** award recognizes outstanding efforts of public employees in service to the community. The recipient of this award is Douglas Crawford, Forest Products Technologist, USDA, Forest Products Laboratory. Crawford has been very active in the South Metropolitan Planning Council (SMPC) to make the south side of Madison a better place to live. He has accomplished this by producing the neighborhood newsletter, hosting meetings and recruiting members for the 10 neighborhoods involved in the partnership.

The recipient of the **Customer Service** award is Norbert P. Aurit, a Quality Assurance Inspector in Avionics for the Wisconsin Air National Guard, 115 Fighter Wing, Department of Defense. This award recognizes an individual's or teams success in meeting or exceeding internal and external customer needs. Aurit designed and maintains the Quality Assurance Website, which contains some of the programs that Aurit developed such as the "aircraft weight and balance program". He has also created user friendly forms and easy access for the branch's customers.

The Social Security "Return to Work" Team will receive the **Effectiveness and Economy of Government** award, which recognizes innovative processes that promote better government. The team consists of the following members: Jerry Bennett, Marjorie Nelson, Mary Wanless, Marilyn Gould, Roberta Herschleb, Doreen Haug, and Sandra Feria. The team has developed an innovative method for getting disabled people back into the work environment, potentially saving hundreds of thousands of dollars locally of Federal Social Security and SSI dollars.

The Partnership/Teamwork award will be presented to the Vocational Training Program Partnership of James Madison Memorial High School and Social Security Administration. This award recognizes the ability to foster effective working relationships within and among the various entities of government and the private sector. Mary Luteyn, John F. Wysocki, Robert Pagna and Dan Gronemus are members of the team that have worked with 25 intellectually disabled students, since 1991, to acquire meaningful work skills to enable them to work in the local business community.

The Forest Products Laboratory Outreach Team will receive the Equal Employment Opportunity/Diversity award that recognizes commitment to the principles of a multi-cultural environment within the Federal Government and community. Team members: Tom Hamilton, Ted Wegner, Jane Kohlman, and Denise Ingram have developed a program with Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, GA to attract high achieving, under-represented minority students to select forest products research as a career path and to pursue advanced degrees in engineering, chemistry, biological sciences, materials science and economics.

The Small Diameter Utilization Team of the USDA Forest Service, Forest Products Laboratory will be presented with the Promoting Government Image award. This award recognizes an agency or agencies

accomplishments, which positively reflect on the public awareness of federal agencies, programs, or employees. This team has worked in four different areas of the United States to help communities to develop small businesses and create jobs by using the forest resources in their area. The team members are: Sue LeVan, Doug Crawford, John Dramm, John Erickson, Dwight Flach, Dave Green, Roland Hernandez, Lola Hislop, Barb Hogan, Gerry Jackson, Ted Laufenberg, Jean Livingston, Jessie Micales, Jim Muehl, Joe Murphy, Adele Olstad, Mike Ritter, Bob Ross, Bill Simpson, Kathy Walker, Agron Gjinolli, Ron Wolfe, John Youngquist, John Zerbe, and Sue Willets.

This year a GMFAA Special Service Recognition award will also be awarded to David A. Carlson an Information Systems Manager of the Cartographic and Publications Program of the U.S. Geological Survey. Carlson developed and maintains the GMFAA website and set up e-mail lists to keep the communication flowing with the organization. His work has benefited every agency and Federal employee.

The USDA Forest Service Forest Products Laboratory was established in 1910 in Madison, Wis., with the mission to conserve and extend the country's wood resources. Today, FPL's research scientists work with academic and industrial researchers and other government agencies in exploring ways to promote healthy forests and clean water, and improve papermaking and recycling processes. Information is available at FPL's Web site: [www.fpl.fs.fed.us](http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us). Through FPL's Advanced Housing Research Center, ([www.fpl.fs.fed.us/ahrc/](http://www.fpl.fs.fed.us/ahrc/)), researchers also work to improve homebuilding technologies and materials.

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