

Civil Rights Division

Anatomy of a Diversity Conference

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As you are probably aware, the FSIS 5th Annual Diversity Conference was held August 19-21, 2003. We believe it was a success. More importantly we believe it accomplished its goals. As information to those who did not attend and as reminder to those who did, herein is provided the skeleton of the many parts that made the Conference a whole success.

Time and Planning: We did not have a lot of time to plan the conference. In fact circumstances afforded only short notice that we would have a conference this year. The corporate knowledge maintained by the staff from previous conferences aided greatly in our moving out smartly in the planning phases of this effort. Everyone's willingness to share made implementation a success.



Coordination: Pick a Coordinator who can follow direction and lead at the same time. The task of being the point person on such an agency wide activity can be daunting. Samora Bennerman took on the task and delivered outstanding results.



Top Level Support: Dr. Pierson delivered a full welcome from the Office of the Under Secretary. Dr. Gary McKee also provided words of welcome, and equally as important, he demonstrated his support by funding the Conference and being an enthusiastic participant.



Senior Level Participation: The success of the program is always enhanced when it has the support and participation of Senior Management.



Superior Keynote Speaker: Al Way, our keynote speaker, was absolutely fantastic. He took the time to study our agency and incorporated our mission into his talk about success and diversity. He put us all in a team spirit and had us "**PULLING TOGETHER**"!



Exceptional Workshop Presentations: Conference participant evaluations tell us that the workshops met and exceeded expectations. This year the workshops offered/ focused on various aspects of diversity, wellness, career enhancement and team building. All were well received and met the objectives.



Enthusiastic Attendees: The attendees came from all over the country. They came ready to immerse themselves in diversity activities and training. The opportunities to NETWORK with colleagues was a feature of the conference that was repeatedly mentioned in the overwhelming positive comments made by participants. We thank you all for the opportunity to serve you.



A Staff “Team”: The staff of the CRD quickly came together as a team to make this conference a success. Every phase of this program involved multiple staff members working together from beginning to end. Work continues even today with post conference activities.



Super Location: The OMNI Shoreham Hotel facility was excellent. The facility was less than a block from metro. The location afforded participants the opportunity to see some of Washington and to explore the significant diversity of cultures located in the immediate vicinity of the hotel. (The Adams Morgan area.)



Committed Director of Civil Rights: When offered the challenge of producing the conference on short notice, I did not hesitate to accept. With the support of the entire CRD, I had no doubt we could not only produce the conference but ensured it would be ranked among the BEST. I need not say more; I talked enough during the conference!



