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Subject: Cabinet Report for the Week of October 18, 2004

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[Week of October 18 - Top Items.doc](#)

[Week of October 18.doc](#)

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Cabinet Report

For the Week of October 18, 2004

**Office of Cabinet Affairs
October 15, 2004
456-2572 (EEOB)
456-0165 (WW)**

TOP ITEMS
FOR THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 18, 2004

- ***HHS to Conduct Medicare “Better Benefits” Bus Tours.***
From October 19 through 23, Secretary Thompson, along with other senior Department officials, will participate in four bus tours featuring events designed to educate seniors about the new Medicare law and to encourage enrollment in the prescription drug discount card program. Potential stops include cities in Alabama, Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.
- ***President’s Board on Safeguarding Americans’ Civil Liberties to Meet.***
On October 19, the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice will Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, a meeting of the President’s Board on Safeguarding Americans’ Civil Liberties in Washington, D.C. The Board will review and assess recommendations from one of the Board’s subgroups on various civil liberties and privacy issues. The Board was established by Executive Order on August 27 and is responsible for advancing the policy of “protect[ing] the legal rights of all Americans, including freedoms, civil liberties, and information privacy guaranteed by Federal law, in the effective performance of national security and homeland security functions.”
- ***Secretaries Paige and Jackson to Host Town Hall Meetings Across the Country.***
From October 17 through 22, the Departments of Education, and Housing and Urban Development, will sponsor six town hall meetings across the country featuring Secretaries Paige and Jackson. These meetings will take place in Washington, D.C.; New York, New York; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Seattle, Washington; Kansas City, Missouri; and Chicago, Illinois. The purpose of these meetings is to inform residents in these cities, with a focus on those living in public housing, about the benefits of the No Child Left Behind Act.
- ***SSA to Release Notice of the Annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).***
On October 19, the Social Security Administration will announce the annual COLA, which based on data released by the Department of Labor. The announcement will include information notifying beneficiaries that they will be “held harmless” and that any increase in Medicare premiums will not have the effect of reducing their social security check below the amount they received last year. Beneficiaries will receive individual notifications in November and December. This announcement will likely result in some negative publicity from those critical of the Administration on poverty, retirees, low income families, and other similar issues. Specific complaints may note that the COLA is well below the Medicare premium increase of 17 percent and other rising living expenses.
- ***Secretary Abraham to Announce \$253 Million Clean Coal Grant in Florida.***
On October 21 or October 22, the Secretary will travel to Orlando, Florida to announce a \$253 million grant to advance Clean Coal Power Initiative. The grant recipient – a team consisting of Southern Power Company, the Orlando Utilities Commission, and Kellogg Brown and Root – will design, construct, and demonstrate the operation of a 285-megawatt, coal-based transport gasifier plant. Positive media coverage is expected, and Governor Bush may participate in this event.

KEY SPEAKING AND TRAVEL ENGAGEMENTS

Date	Location	Audience / Event	Speech
<i>Secretary Abraham</i>			
18-October	Tulsa, OK	Political Event	Remarks
19-October	Seattle, WA	Political Event	Remarks
20-21 October	Orlando, FL	Fossil Energy Event	Grant Announcement
<i>Attorney General Ashcroft</i>			
19-October	Washington, D.C.	U.S. Chamber of Commerce	Remarks
21-22 October	Ottawa, Canada	Cross Border Crime Forum	Attend
<i>Secretary Chao</i>			
18-October	Albuquerque, NM	Political Event	Remarks
19-October	Longwood, FL	Political Event	Remarks
20-October	Washington, D.C.	Disability Mentoring Day; Political Event	Remarks
21-October	Etna, PA	Hurricane National Emergency Grant	Grant Announcement
22-October	Washington, D.C.	Economic State Numbers Day	Remarks
22-October	Frankfort, KY	Kentucky State Dinner	Attend

<i>Secretary Evans</i>			
18-October	Houston, TX	Political Event	Remarks
18-19 October	Miami, FL	Goodwill Industries of South Florida; White House Faith-Based Conference Luncheon; Political Event	Tour; Speech; Attend
20-October	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Broward Alliance Economic Development Event	Attend
21-October	Des Moines, IA; TBD, MO (T)	Manufacturing Event; Political Event	Speech; Remarks
<i>Secretary Jackson</i>			
18-October	Brooklyn, NY	Christian Culture Center No Child Left Behind Event with Sec. Paige	Remarks
18-19 October	Philadelphia, PA	Tindley Temple No Child Left Behind event with Sec. Paige; We Care America Faith-Based Event	Remarks; Roundtable
20-21 October	Kansas City, MO	Clymer Community Center No Child Left Behind Event with Sec. Paige; Political Event	Remarks
22-October	Columbus, OH	Homeownership Event (T)	Remarks
23-October	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">b(6)</div>		

<i>Administrator Leavitt</i>			
18-October	Edgewater, MD	World Water Monitoring Day Event; two Editorial Boards	Remarks
21-October	Wheeling, WV	Roundtable with Members of the Manufacturing Association	Remarks
21-22 October	Pittsburgh, PA	Society of Environmental Journalists	Remarks
24-25 October	Hershey, PA	Annual Executive Leadership Conference	Remarks
<i>Secretary Mineta</i>			
18-October	Ashburn, VA	Grand Opening of the National Transportation Safety Board Academy	Remarks
19-October	Falls Church, VA	Federal Motor Carriers Listening Session	Remarks
19-20 October	Cleveland, OH	Euclid Transit Groundbreaking Event	Remarks
20-October	St. Petersburg, FL	2004 Tony Jannus Award Dinner	Award Recipient

<i>Secretary Norton</i>			
19-October	Longwood, FL; Wekiva Springs, FL	Political Events	Attend
21-October	Loveland, CO Farmington, NM (T)	Political Events	Remarks
22-October	Albuquerque, NM	Water 2025 Event at the Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce with Congressional Delegation	Grant Announcement
<i>Secretary Paige</i>			
18-October	Brooklyn, NY	Christian Culture Center No Child Left Behind Event with Sec. Jackson	Speech
18-19 October	Philadelphia, PA	Tindley Temple No Child Left Behind Event with Sec. Jackson; Political Event; Faith-Based Event (T)	Speech
19-20 October	Seattle, WA	New Holley Learning Center No Child Left Behind event	Speech
20-21 October	Kansas City, MO	Clymer Community Center No Child Left Behind Event with Sec. Jackson; Political Event	Speech
22-October	Chicago, IL	Charles Hayes Investment Center No Child Left Behind Event	Speech
22-23 October	Orlando, FL	National Association of State Boards of Education Annual Conference; Political Event	Speech

23-October	Miami, FL	Political Event (T)	Attend
24-October	Philadelphia, PA	Political Event (T)	Remarks
<i>Secretary Powell</i>			
19-October	Washington, D.C.	Small Business of the Year Awards	Remarks
22-25 October	Seoul, South Korea Tokyo, Japan Beijing, China	Meetings with Asian Foreign Ministers; Press Availability	Meetings; Remarks
<i>Secretary Principi</i>			
18-October	Bronx, NY	Lunch with Congressman Engel (D-NY)	Meeting
20-October	Anchorage, AK	Political Event	Remarks
22-October	Washington, D.C.	Detroit Free Press; Knight Ridder	Interview
22-October	Clemson, SC	Clemson University	Speech
23-October	b(6)		
24-25 October	San Diego, CA	60 th Anniversary of the Supreme Sacrifice of the Men of Taffy III	Speech
<i>Secretary Ridge</i>			
18-19 October	New Haven, CT; Hartford, CT ; New York, NY	Meet with Business Leaders and Business Magazines for “Ready Business” campaign	Roundtable

<i>Secretary Snow</i>			
19-October	Lancaster, PA	Discussion with Local Business Leaders and Rep. Pitts (R-PA); Sechan Electrical Manufacturing	Roundtable; Tour
20-October	Tampa, FL	School-to-Work Program	Meeting
21-22 October	Orlando, FL	Florida Bankers Association Leadership Dinner	Speech
22-23 October	b(6)		
24-25 October	Milwaukee, WI	Banc of America's 2004 Economic Forum	Remarks
<i>Secretary Thompson</i>			
18-October	Tampa/Orlando, FL	Political Event	Remarks
20-October	Las Vegas, NV	Political Events	Remarks
20-21 October	New York, NY	Ad Council	Speech
21-22 October	Cincinnati, OH	Political Event	Remarks
22-October	Des Moines, IA	Better Benefits Tour	Remarks
22-October	Dubuque, IA	Political Event	Remarks
22-23 October	Hayward, WI	Political Events	Remarks
23-October	Burlington/Madison, WI	Political Events	Remarks
24-October	Milwaukee/Green Bay, WI	Better Benefits Tour	Remarks

<i>Secretary Veneman</i>			
18-October	Miami, FL	Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Conference	Remarks
18-October	Homestead, FL	Political Event	Attend
20-October	Presque Isle, ME (T)	Political Events	Remarks
21-October	Derry/Milford, NH	Political Event	Bus Tour
23-October	Van Wert, OH (T)	Political Event	Attend

CABINET REPORT

For the Week of October 18, 2004

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

- ***Secretary Veneman to Address HACU Conference.***
On October 18, the Secretary will travel to Miami, Florida to address the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) conference. The HACU represents more than 350 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Latin America, and Spain. The Secretary will discuss the importance of higher education and accept HACU's Outstanding Public Sector Partner Award on behalf of the Department.
- ***Department to Announce Conservation Agreement with Ohio.***
On October 18, the Department will sign a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) agreement with the State of Ohio. CREP is a voluntary program for agricultural landowners that provides incentive payments for implementing specific conservation practices. Through this program, landowners can receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource-conserving methods on eligible land. The agreement includes 70,000 acres in central Ohio and will more than triple the size of all acres of land in Ohio currently under CREP coverage.
- ***Department to Award \$1.9 Million Food Stamp Bonus to Oregon.***
On October 18, the Department will present a Food Stamp Program Performance Bonus Award of \$1.9 million to the State of Oregon in recognition of the State's high participant access rate. This award is a portion of the previously announced \$48 million total that the 2002 Farm Bill authorized awards to States that demonstrate high or improved performance in administering the Food Stamp Program.

Press Activity:

- ***Los Angeles Times Magazine on U.S. Forest Service.***
As early as this week, the *Los Angeles Times Magazine* is expected to publish a story on the Forest Service. Potential topics include the Healthy Forests Initiative, the decision to ground a group of air tankers, and criticism of Forest Service policies by the GAO as well as environmentalists. Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth was interviewed for this story, which will be negative.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

- ***Department to Present \$2.1 Million Supporting Economic Development in Michigan.***
On October 19, the Department will present a \$2.1 million investment check to Central Michigan University of Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. The investment will help build a nano-technology wet-lab incubation facility and renovate an existing incubator facility. The investment is expected to create 58 immediate jobs with related private investment estimated to be \$3.4 million within the first three years.

- ***Secretary Evans to Address Broward County Alliance Annual Luncheon in Florida.***
On October 20, the Secretary will deliver the keynote address to the Broward Alliance Annual Luncheon in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He will discuss the state of the economy and Six-Point Plan for economic growth. The Broward Alliance is a public/private partnership that promotes economic development and business retention in Broward County, Florida. Its members include county and municipal government officials, as well as representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and other Broward industry organizations.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- ***Department to Host National Principals' Forum.***
On October 19 and 20, the Department will host a National Principals' Forum in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the Forum is to help tackle the real-world issues facing principals striving to close the achievement gap at their schools. It is intended to help principals in schools struggling to improve student performance by sharing concrete strategies for becoming better instructional leaders.
- ***Secretary Paige to Participate in NASBE Annual Conference.***
On October 23, the Secretary will deliver remarks to the annual conference of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) in Orlando, Florida. The conference theme is "Higher Goals, Higher Achievement: A Vision for Every Child." NASBE works with State Boards of Education across the country to strengthen state leadership in educational policymaking, promote excellence in the education of all students, advocate equality of access to educational opportunity, and assure continued citizen support for public education.
- ***Department to Continue Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative Activities.***
On October 23, the Department will host a Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative workshop on math in Redmond, Washington. Similar workshops were previously held in Wheeling, West Virginia and Bentonville, Arkansas. As part of this initiative, the Department has launched eLearning for Teachers, which is a series of free online professional development programs that allow teachers to view recent Teacher-to-Teacher Workshop sessions on reading, math, school leadership, and No Child Left Behind. School districts may count teachers' participation in these programs toward their professional development requirements.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

- ***Department to Participate in Dedication of Hydrogen Technology Park in Michigan.***
On October 19, the Department will participate in the opening ceremony of a Hydrogen Technology Park in Southfield, Michigan. The Department, the State of Michigan, BP, and other project partners collaborated to establish this hydrogen demonstration project to provide critical insight into the role of hydrogen in the country's energy system.

- ***Department to Announce \$36 Million Clean Coal Grant in Minnesota.***
On October 19, the Department will announce a \$36 million grant in Duluth, Minnesota to advance the Clean Coal Power Initiative. The recipient, a team consisting of Excelsior Energy and ConocoPhillips, will design and construct a 530-megawatt Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle Power Plant. Positive media coverage is expected.

Press Activity:

- ***Secretary Abraham to be Interviewed by “60 Minutes” on Nonproliferation Policy.***
This week, the CBS news program “60 Minutes” will interview the Secretary concerning the most recent nuclear fuel shipment from Uzbekistan and how that shipment supports U.S. nonproliferation policy. In September, 11 kilograms of enriched uranium fuel, including highly enriched uranium that could be used for nuclear weapons, were safely returned to Russia from Uzbekistan under the Global Threat Reduction Initiative. This story is expected to be neutral in tone, but a broadcast date is not yet known.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

- ***Agency to Announce EnviroFlash Pilot Project.***
This week, EPA will announce the start of the EnviroFlash pilot project involving seven cities across the country. EnviroFlash is an email alert system developed by the Agency that local governments can use to notify the public when an unhealthy air quality day is forecast. The seven pilot cities are: Cincinnati, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; Nashville, Tennessee; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Phoenix, Arizona; St. Louis, Missouri; and Winston-Salem, North Carolina. These pilot projects are the first step in making the EnviroFlash system available on a national basis. Public reaction and local media attention are expected to be positive.
- ***Agency to Kick Off Federal Electronics Challenge.***
On October 21, the Agency will join the White House Council on Environmental Quality in sponsoring a Summit to kick off the Federal Electronics Challenge. The Challenge is a voluntary program that encourages Federal facilities and agencies to purchase “greener” electronic products, reduce the harmful environmental impacts of electronic products during use, and manage obsolete electronics in an environmentally safe way. This Summit is designed to encourage Federal agencies to become Challenge partners and commit to reducing environmental impacts from the acquisition, use, and disposal of electronic equipment.
- ***Administrator Leavitt to Address Society of Environmental Journalists.***
On October 22, the Administrator will travel to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to deliver the keynote address to the annual conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ). SEJ is a nonprofit organization of 1,300 print, radio, television, and online journalists and students dedicated to improving the quality, accuracy, and visibility of environmental news. He will discuss the Clean Air Interstate Rule, mercury-related issues, brownfields, and the clean diesel initiative. A record number of 400-plus journalists from across the country are expected. Positive national media attention is anticipated.

Press Activity:

- ***Washington Post on Administration's Environmental Record.***
This weekend, *The Washington Post* is expected to publish a story concerning the Administration's environmental record. The tone of the story is anticipated to be mixed.
- ***USA Today on Administration's Environmental Record.***
This weekend, *USA Today* is expected to publish a story concerning the Administration's environmental record. The tone of the story is anticipated to be mixed.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- ***CMS Administrator to Address Medicare Conference.***
On October 19, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator, Dr. Mark McClellan, is scheduled to speak at America's Health Insurance Plans 2004 Medicare Conference in Washington, D.C. He will address more than 500 health plan executives, management professionals, and medical directors about the next steps in implementing the Medicare Modernization Action and how their organization can work with CMS to improve quality of care.
- ***Home Health Prospective Payment Rate Update for Calendar Year 2005 to be Published.***
On October 22, the final rule updating the Home Health Prospective Payment Rate for Calendar Year 2005 will be published in the *Federal Register*. This rule updates the 60-day national episode rates and the national per-visit amounts under the Medicare prospective payment system for home health agencies. It also proposes to re-base and revise the home health market basket to reflect total cost and modify certain variables for some of the cost categories.

Press Activity:

- ***Wall Street Journal Article on Animal Cloning Research.***
This week, the Department expects the *Wall Street Journal* to run a story on the work of Dr. Gerald Schatten, a grantee of the NIH National Center for Research Resources (NCRR), and his research to produce transgene expressing non-human primate offspring and sets of genetically identical offspring (animal cloning). The reporter is exploring the angle that non-human primate cloning research might lead to a blueprint for human reproductive cloning. The Department anticipates that this article will be linked to the United Nations cloning debate, which is expected to begin October 21 or 22. NIH and HHS are working with the reporter to ensure an objective story.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

- ***Citizenship and Immigration Services to Submit Backlog Elimination Report to Congress.***
On October 21, Citizenship and Immigration Services is tentatively scheduled to submit its quarterly Backlog Elimination Statistics report to Congress. This is an update to the report

submitted to Congress in June 2004. The report will state that the backlog has been reduced by almost 340,000 applications, completions are up 25 percent as compared to the third quarter in FY 2003, and completions have outpaced receipts in eight of the last nine months.

Press Activity:

- ***Secretary Ridge to Participate in Business Magazine Roundtable.***
On October 19, Secretary Ridge is tentatively scheduled to participate in a business magazine roundtable with journalists from *Fortune Small Business*, *Forbes Fast Company, Inc.*, and *My Business* magazines in New York City. The roundtable topic of discussion will be Ready Business, a component of the Ready campaign that educates businesses on how to safeguard their resources, assets, and information during all hazards.
- ***Secretary Ridge to Participate in EMK Christian Radio Interview.***
On October 22, Secretary Ridge will participate in a taped EMK Christian Radio interview via telephone, which is expected to be broadcast nationwide the first week of November. The primary topic of discussion will be the Ready campaign.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

- ***Department to Release Community Outreach Grants to Colleges and Universities.***
On October 18, the Department will release nearly \$5.5 million in Community Outreach grants to 13 colleges and universities throughout the country including institutions in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Kansas. These grants help colleges and universities apply their human, intellectual, and institutional resources to the revitalization of distressed communities. These grants must be used in urban areas to address local housing, infrastructure, economic development, neighborhood revitalization, health care, crime, or planning.
- ***Department and Census Bureau to Release Housing Starts and Permits Data.***
On October 19, the Department and the Census Bureau will release Housing Starts and Permits data for the month of September.
- ***Department to Provide \$43.7 Million to Support Housing Counseling.***
This week, the Department will announce that it has selected 18 national and regional organizations and approximately 340 state and local housing counseling agencies to receive \$36 million in Housing Counseling grants. It is estimated that the grants will help over 700,000 individuals and families either become first-time homeowners or remain homeowners. In addition, the Department will award \$7.75 million to the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation to establish a nationwide housing counseling service.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

- ***Department to Announce \$500,000 Grant for Historic Landmark in Pennsylvania.***
On October 19, the Department will announce a \$500,000 Save America's Treasure grant in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for the Mother Bethel Foundation. The grant will be used to

address structural problems of the Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church. This National Historic Landmark is the mother church of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, founded by former slave Richard Allen. The Save America's Treasures Grants program, administered by the National Park Service and National Endowment for the Arts, was established to help preserve America's cultural heritage. Prior your Administration, churches were not eligible to receive these grants.

- ***Department to Award \$1.3 Million Water Grant in New Mexico.***

On October 22, Secretary Norton will travel to Albuquerque, New Mexico to award a \$1.3 million Water 2025 Grant to the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. In her remarks, the Secretary will emphasize Administration efforts to help solve Western water supply issues. The Water 2025 initiative helps manage scarce water resources and develop partnerships to nourish a healthy environment and sustain a vibrant economy. Senator Pete Domenici (R-NM) will also participate in this event.

- ***DOI to Announce More Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act Funding.***

On October 22, the Department will announce \$109 million of second-round funding from the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act as part of a 20th anniversary celebration at Red Rock Canyon Recreation Area. The initial \$720 million round of funding was announced in August. The Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act authorizes the Department to sell public lands in a specified area around Las Vegas twice each year. Auction proceeds are used to fund conservation and land acquisition projects within the State of Nevada.

Press Activity:

- ***New York Times and Newsday on Coastal Barrier Resources Act.***

As early as this weekend, both *The New York Times* and *Newsday* may publish stories on the Coastal Barrier Resources Act. The Act discourages development in areas that are prone to hurricanes and flooding and is controversial with respect to landowners who own real estate in areas designated by the Act. The articles are expected to neutral, if not negative, in tone.

- ***Los Angeles Times Story on Management of Public Lands in Utah.***

This weekend, the *Los Angeles Times* is likely to publish a story on public land management in Utah. Environmentalists have criticized the Department for not designating certain Utah lands as wilderness area. The story is expected to be negative.

- ***Secretary Norton to Meet with Editorial Board of Orlando Sentinel.***

On October 20, the Secretary is tentatively scheduled to meet with the editorial board of the *Orlando Sentinel*. She will discuss Administration support for National Parks in Florida.

- ***Secretary Norton to Interview with Spanish Language Newspaper.***

On October 20, the Secretary is tentatively scheduled to be interviewed by *El Nuevo Dia*, a Spanish language newspaper in Orlando, Florida. The Secretary will discuss the Administration's support for National Parks in Florida and Puerto Rico.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

- ***United States v. Microsoft: Status of Compliance with Final Judgment.***
On October 19, the Antitrust Division, along with 18 states and Microsoft, will appear in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia for a status conference on Microsoft's compliance with the Final Judgment. This will be the seventh in a series of status conferences, which were established by the court to monitor and ensure full implementation of the Final Judgment.
- ***Attorney General Ashcroft to Speak at Cross-Border Crime Forum in Ottawa, Canada.***
From October 21 to 22, the Attorney General is scheduled to speak at the Eighth Annual Canada and United States Cross-Border Crime Forum in Ottawa, Canada. He will highlight joint law enforcement cooperation. Approximately 150 law enforcement personnel from both the U.S. and Canada are confirmed to attend. Media coverage is expected.
- ***Hearing on Income Tax Refund Case Brought by Same-Sex Couple.***
On October 21, a Federal judge will hear oral argument on the government's motion to dismiss an income tax refund suit brought by J. Michael McConnell, who, along with his male companion, filed an amended tax return claiming "married filing jointly" status. Following the IRS's disallowance of the administrative claim for refund, Mr. McConnell filed a refund suit. In the early 1970s, Mr. McConnell and his male companion lost their State court case and their Supreme Court appeal seeking recognition as same-sex married persons, and in 1976 they lost their Federal suit seeking the increased educational benefits available to married veterans.

Press Activity:

- ***Attorney General to Participate in Press Conference on Violent Crime Impact Teams.***
On October 19, Attorney General Ashcroft is expected to participate in a press conference in Washington, D.C. to highlight progress made by Violent Crime Impact Teams (VCITs). This initiative was announced four months ago, and the Attorney General will report on the dramatic successes of the teams in taking habitual criminal offenders off the streets in 15 cities across the country.
- ***Attorney General Ashcroft to Speak at Intellectual Property Conference.***
On October 20, the Attorney General is scheduled to speak at an intellectual property conference titled, "Activate Your Mind," to be held in Washington, D.C. The event is sponsored by the Justice Department in conjunction with Court TV and features high school students discussing intellectual property issues. Trade press coverage is anticipated.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

- ***Million Worker March to be Held in Washington, D.C.***
On October 17, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, the National Coalition of Black Unionists, the South Carolina State AFL-CIO Labor Federation, and local and state union chapters from across the country will host the "Million Worker March" in Washington,

D.C. However, the AFL-CIO has issued a directive to all of its state federations and central labor councils to boycott the march stating that it “distracts resources from defeating President Bush.”

- ***Department to Sponsor “Skilled Trades Day” in St. Louis.***

On October 18, the Department will sponsor “Skilled Trades Day” at Baer Park in St. Louis, Missouri, as part of the “Skills to Build America’s Future” initiative. The event, in conjunction with the St. Louis Rams’ Monday night football game, will highlight the well-paying jobs and career opportunities available in the skilled trades.

- ***Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) to Release Reports.***

On October 19, BLS will release the Consumer Price Index Report for September 2004 along with the Real Earnings Report for September 2004. On October 22, BLS will release the Regional and State Employment and Unemployment Report for September 2004.

- ***Department to Announce Grant to Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership.***

On October 19, the Department will announce a \$3.1 million grant to the Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership in Beaverton, Oregon. The grant is part of the High Growth Job Training Initiative to train workers for advanced manufacturing jobs. This grant will be used to train more than 2,000 workers in Oregon, Idaho, Washington, and Nevada.

- ***Department to Announce Grant to Delaware Valley Industrial Resource Center.***

On October 20, the Department will announce a \$3 million grant to the Delaware Valley Industrial Center in Media, Pennsylvania. The grant is part of the High Growth Job Training Initiative to train workers in the greater Philadelphia area for advanced manufacturing jobs. The project will develop a model for helping the industry develop and recruit workers for new technical education programs and will initially train over 400 entry-level and incumbent workers for over 300 companies.

Press Activity:

- ***Secretaries Chao, Veneman, and Norton to Appear in Harper’s Bazaar Magazine.***

During the week of October 18, the November issue of *Harper’s Bazaar* will be released, which will include an article on women in the Federal government. The photo spread will feature Secretaries Chao, Norton, and Veneman. This is expected to be a positive article.

NASA

- ***Soyuz Spacecraft Launched with International Space Station Crew.***

On October 13, the tenth crew of the International Space Station successfully rocketed into space, beginning their six-month mission. A Soyuz spacecraft carried Station Expedition 10 Commander and NASA Science Officer Leroy Chiao and Flight Engineer Salizhan Sharipov to orbit along with Russian Space Forces Test Cosmonaut Yuri Shargin. The Soyuz launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome, Kazakhstan and is on course to dock with the Station on October 16.

- ***Spirit and Opportunity Rovers Continue Missions.***

The *Spirit* and *Opportunity* rovers have been exploring Mars about three times as long as originally scheduled. Team members reported that the rovers have discovered more evidence of past liquid water on Mars. About six months ago, *Opportunity* established that its exploration area was wet before it dried and eroded into a wide plain. The team's new findings suggest that some rocks may have gotten wet a second time, after an impact excavated a stadium-sized crater. Plate-like rocks near the bottom of the crater bear networks of cracks dividing the surface into patterns similar in appearance to cracked mud after the water has dried up here on Earth.

OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY

- ***Director Walters to Announce Drug-Free Communities Grantees in Four States.***

From October 18 to 21, the Director will hold press conferences to announce new Drug-Free Communities Grantees in Tucson, Arizona; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Reno, Nevada; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In Tucson, where the grantee is part of a Native American tribe, Native American leaders, State drug prevention officials, and Congressman Jim Kolbe (R-AZ) will attend the press conference. In Santa Fe, the press conference will feature local prevention groups and law enforcement officials. In Reno, the Director will be joined by Senator Jon Ensign (R-NV), local prevention groups, and law enforcement officials, and in Philadelphia, the Director will be joined by Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) and existing grantees from Reading and Quakertown, Pennsylvania. Also, from October 19 to 21, Deputy Director Mary Ann Solberg will be announcing Drug-Free Communities Grantees in Kansas City, Missouri, and Des Moines, Iowa.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

- ***Parliamentary Elections to be Held in Belarus.***

On October 17, Belarus will hold parliamentary elections. Given the poor record of Belarusian authorities in conducting elections, there are doubts whether this vote will meet international standards. The current Lukashenko regime has refused to register 40 percent of would-be candidates. This vote assumed a greater significance with Lukashenko's September 7 announcement that a constitutional amendment to permit him to run for a third term in 2006 will also be on the ballot.

- ***Iraqi Government Public Affairs Representatives to Visit United States for Training.***

On October 18, a group of Iraqi public affairs professionals will begin a three-week International Visitor Leadership program sponsored by the Department entitled "Public Affairs: The Art of Engaging and Informing the Press." The group will participate in several meetings in Washington, D.C. before traveling to Boston, Portland, Dallas, Philadelphia, and New York to further examine the role of public and private sector spokespersons.

- ***Parliamentary Elections to be Held in Kosovo.***
On October 23, elections for the Kosovo Assembly will be held. Kosovo Albanian parties are organized and mobilized in preparation for the elections, while Kosovo Serb parties are only just beginning their preparations. Serbian President Tadic has called for Kosovo Serbs to participate while Serbian Prime Minister Kostunica continues to support a boycott.

Press Activity:

- ***Secretary Powell to Present Department's Small Business of the Year Award.***
On October 19, the Secretary will present the Department's Small Business of the Year Award to Quick Protective Systems of Stuart, Florida. The Department presents this award to the best small business that it works with in the previous year. Quick Protective Services produces the chem-bio escape hood used by the Department as well as several other Federal agencies.
- ***Ambassador Tobias to Meet With Washington Post Editorial Writer.***
On October 20, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Tobias will meet with Sebastian Mallaby, editorial writer for *The Washington Post*. Beyond discussing the general status of U.S. global AIDS efforts, there are no set topics for this meeting.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

- ***Secretary Mineta to Participate in Groundbreaking for Ohio Transportation Project.***
On October 19, the Secretary will join Senator George Voinovich (R - OH) and Governor Robert Taft (R) for a groundbreaking ceremony for the Euclid Corridor Transportation Project, which is a nearly ten mile Bus Rapid Transit Zone. The project will address the current roadway configuration, poor pavement condition, mixed traffic flow and antiquated traffic signal system, which causes slow and inefficient transit service on the corridor and in the downtown area. The total project cost is \$168.4 million. The Federal share is \$82.2 million (or 49 percent of the project cost.)
- ***Secretary Mineta to Meet with Iraqi Minister of Housing and Construction.***
On October 22, the Secretary will meet with the Iraqi Minister of Housing and Construction, Dr. Omar Al-Damluji, in Washington, D.C. Minister Al-Damluji is visiting the U.S. to tour road and bridge construction facilities and to hold senior-level discussions with U.S. and State transportation officials. Topics of discussion will include the process of awarding road and bridge contracts in Iraq, the establishment of a technology transfer center in Iraq, and the possibility of training Iraqi nationals in the U.S. about advanced road design and drafting software.
- ***Inspector General to Issue Report on FAA Computer Security.***
On October 22, the Office of the Inspector General will issue its final report on security and controls over the FAA Technical Center Computer System. This is the second in a series of three reports regarding FAA computer security. The objectives of this review were to determine whether en route developmental systems housed in the computer system at the FAA's Technical Center in Pomona, New Jersey, are adequately secured to ensure the

integrity, confidentiality, and availability of air traffic control testing and modernization efforts. This report contains security sensitive information and will not be released publicly.

Press Activity:

- ***USA Today Editorial on Bus Safety.***

On October 18, *USA Today* will publish an editorial that will criticize the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for failing to act on bus safety recommendations urging safety belts and establishing tougher standards for window strength that were made by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) in 2000. NHTSA is preparing stronger bus window safety standards, but their research shows that safety belts would not improve bus safety. This negative editorial is linked to a fatal bus crash in Arkansas on October 9, which killed 15 Chicago-area residents when their bus rolled over. DOT will provide a 350-word response.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

- ***Secretary Snow to Discuss Health Care in Pennsylvania.***

On October 19, the Secretary will travel to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where he will join Congressman Joe Pitts (R-PA) at the Lancaster General Health Campus for a discussion on the economy and health care with local business leaders. He will also tour Sechan Electronics and meet with company executives.

- ***Secretary Snow to Discuss Job Training and the Economy in Florida.***

On October 20 and 21, the Secretary will travel to Florida to discuss job training and the economy. In Tampa Bay, he will visit a high school classroom to discuss the importance of job training with students and teachers participating in a hospitality industry school-to-work program. In Orlando, he will deliver remarks on the economy at a meeting of over 400 members of the Florida Bankers Association.

- ***Upcoming Economic Indicator Releases.***

Monthly Treasury Statement: September (October 18)
Leading Indicators: September (October 21)

UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

- ***USTR to File Cotton Appeal with the World Trade Organization.***

On October 18, USTR will file an appeal to the September World Trade Organization (WTO) verdict concerning several types of U.S. agricultural support measures, including support for cotton farmers. The WTO panel sided with Brazil on some of its claims that some U.S. farm payments cause adverse effects to Brazil and that other U.S. measures are prohibited, including export credit guarantees for some agricultural commodities. The processing of the case, filed by Brazil, is lengthy, and there is no immediate impact on U.S. farm programs. The U.S. supports resolving these issues through negotiations in the Doha Round at the WTO.

- ***Outgoing European Union Trade Commissioner to Discuss Trade Issues with USTR.***
On October 18, Ambassador Zoellick will meet with EU Commissioner Pascal Lamy. They will discuss bilateral trade issues and the WTO. Separate meetings for the Ambassador in Brussels will also include key European Union Parliament members.
- ***Ambassador Zoellick to Address Food Safety with European Union Health Commissioner.***
On October 19, Ambassador Zoellick will meet with EU Commissioner of Health and Consumer Protection David Byrne to discuss bilateral trade issues related to food safety. Outstanding issues include poultry safety standards, swine fever, and intergovernmental cooperation.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

- ***VA Facilities Considered for Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.***
From October 17 through 23, examiners from the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award Program and the National Institute of Standards and Technology will visit the White River Junction VA Medical Center in Vermont and the VA Healthcare Network in New York as part of the award evaluation process. The Baldrige Award is awarded to businesses and to education and health care organizations that are judged to be outstanding in key management areas. This is the first time any Federal organization has advanced so far in the Baldrige competition.
- ***American Legion to Conduct Site Visits within Midwest Health Care Network.***
On October 21 and 22, the American Legion will conduct site visits at VA Medical Centers in Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Omaha, Nebraska, respectively. These site visits are part of a nationwide program entitled “A System Worth Saving.” This is an ongoing effort by the American Legion to demonstrate to Congress the value of VA’s health care system and to document its current ability to provide for the needs of veterans.

Press Activity:

- ***Knight Ridder News Service on VA Claims.***
This week, VA expects *Knight Ridder* to distribute a story based upon an October 13 interview with Secretary Principi by Joseph Galloway. The interview focused on VA processes for handling the disability claims of returning combat veterans. Mr. Galloway is co-author of the book, *We Were Soldiers Once, and Young*. Since some past stories on this issue have been negative, this is expected to be a negative story as well.

OTHER AGENCIES

Corporation for National and Community Service:

- ***CEO Eisner to Swear in New Class of AmeriCorps Members in Ohio.***
On October 20, Corporation for National and Community Service CEO Eisner will deliver

remarks and swear in a new class of AmeriCorps Members at the Ohio AmeriCorps Member Kick-Off and 10th Anniversary Celebration. AmeriCorps engages Americans in innovative, intensive service to meet community needs in education, the environment, public safety, homeland security, and other areas. Members serve with national non-profit organizations, as well as with hundreds of smaller community organizations, both secular and faith-based.

General Services Administration:

- ***GSA Continues to Assist Veteran and Service-Disabled Veteran Business Owners.***
On October 18 and 19 in Kansas City, Missouri, Administrator Perry will participate and serve as a speaker at a two-day event designed to build momentum for ongoing GSA efforts to assist veteran and service-disabled veteran small business owners. A similar event was held last May in Washington, D.C. at which GSA provided information on opportunities for veterans to conduct business with the Federal government. Part of the conference was devoted to Operation Fastbreak, a program designed by GSA to improve outreach to service-disabled veteran small business owners.

Office of Personnel Management:

- ***Planned Parenthood Attacks Catholic Federal Employee Health Plan Option.***
OPM continues to receive opposition form letters prompted by Planned Parenthood that target the Catholic Order of Saint Francis (OSF) Health Plans, a member of the Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) Program. The letters oppose the OSF Health Plan because it will not cover contraceptive services, abortions, or abortion-related services under any circumstances. While the letters argue that the Administration is offering this plan as part of its faith-based initiative, in fact, the plan is not a faith-based directed initiative; it is merely a qualified health plan that has met the same high standards as the other 248 plans in the FEHB. OPM is coordinating a response. Media interest includes the *Kansas City Star*, *Chicago Tribune*, *The Village Voice*, and *Catholic News Service*.

Peace Corps:

- ***Peace Corps Closely Monitoring Operations in Haiti.***
Due to escalating violence, the U.S. Embassy in Haiti is in an authorized departure status and Peace Corps is monitoring its operations in Haiti closely. The seven Peace Corps volunteers in southern Haiti are in frequent communication with Agency staff and are under orders not to travel away from their sites due to planned protests in Port-au-Prince. Since 1982, more than 450 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in Haiti.

Small Business Administration:

- ***Administrator Barreto to Address Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce.***
On October 20, the Administrator will be the keynote speaker at a local Chamber of Commerce event in Portsmouth, Ohio. The Administrator will be the guest of Congressman Rob Portman (R-OH) and will discuss your small business agenda. Over 200 local leaders and small business owners are expected to attend.

USAID:

- ***Administrator Natsios to Address World Tourism Organization.***

On October 19, the Administrator will speak at the World Tourism Organization's Tourism Policy Forum at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Twelve key tourism ministers and 48 development ministers from 44 countries will attend as well as approximately 100 representatives of the private sector, government, and civil society. The Administrator will highlight USAID's tourism project portfolio and strategic goals for sustainable tourism activities.