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Subject: Cabinet Report for the Week of October 25, 2004

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Cabinet Report

For the Week of October 25, 2004

**Office of Cabinet Affairs
October 22, 2004
456-2572 (EEOB)
456-0165 (WW)**

TOP ITEMS
FOR THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 25, 2004

- ***USDA to Announce Allocation of \$450 Million in Disaster Assistance.***
On October 25, the Department will announce the allocation of \$450 million in disaster assistance funds, consisting of \$250 million for the Emergency Watershed Protection Program to help restore critical watersheds; \$100 million for the Emergency Conservation Program for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and carry out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought; and \$100 million for the Forest Service to repair roads and facilities, to assist private landowners, and to remove debris. This funding was appropriated in recent emergency disaster supplemental appropriations in accordance with your request to Congress.
- ***Department of Agriculture to Release Report on Rural America.***
On October 25, the Department's Economic Research Service will release a report entitled "Rural America at a Glance." Overall, this report will state that economic conditions in rural areas are favorable. Specific conclusions will include that, in 2004, rural areas exhibited moderate to strong growth; benefited from strong export growth; and experienced substantial job growth, including the first increase in manufacturing jobs since 1998. It will also show that the 2003 non-metro poverty rate remained stable despite an increase in the national rate.
- ***EPA to Release Air Quality Criteria Document for Particulate Matter.***
This week, EPA will announce the availability of the final Particulate Matter (PM) Air Quality Criteria Document. The document provides an assessment of the latest scientific information on the effects of airborne PM on public health and welfare for use in EPA's periodic review of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and the appropriateness of new or revised standards. Mixed trade press attention is anticipated, with the potential for national media attention.
- ***HHS Leadership to Participate in Flu Education and Outreach Bus Tour.***
From October 19 through 26, Secretary Thompson, Surgeon General Carmona, CDC Director Gerberding, and NIH Director Zerhouni will participate in a bus tour visiting multiple cities in several states to educate the public on how the flu vaccine shortage is being addressed. This bus tour was originally planned to promote the Medicare Modernization Act. Potential stops will include cities in Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Wisconsin.
- ***DOI to Announce Second Round of Funding for Southern Nevada Public Lands.***
On October 26, Secretary Norton is scheduled to announce the second round of funding under the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act, totaling \$109 million. The initial round of funding of \$720 million was announced in early August. The Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act authorizes the Bureau of Land Management to sell public lands in a circumscribed area around Las Vegas twice each year. Funds raised from the auction support conservation and land acquisition projects within the State of Nevada. This announcement was originally scheduled to occur on October 22.

- ***FBI to Release Uniform Crime Report Showing Record Lows in Violent Crime.***
On October 25, the FBI will release the Uniform Crime Report, an annual compilation of crime statistics. The report will show that violent crime has declined further, to the lowest levels in more than 30 years (since 1973). Violent crime is down 3 percent from 2002, declining in every region of the country. The violent crime rate per 100,000 persons is down 3.9 percent from 2002 (down 6.1 percent since 2000). While the murder rate has gone up 0.7 percent, the robbery offense rate, the rape offense rate, and the aggravated assault rate are all down. The property crime rate is at a 30-year low. The report is expected to generate significant press coverage.
- ***Department of Justice Requests Federal Election Examiners and Observers from OPM.***
This week, OPM is preparing to send 691 Federal examiners and observers to 20 locations across the country to assist with the November 2 election. Under the Voting Rights Act of 1965, OPM is responsible for providing Federal examiners to register voters and receive complaints during elections, and Federal observers to monitor the election process in areas designated by the Attorney General. There will be 270 qualified individuals standing by should additional support be required.

PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATIONS

- ***State of Maryland: Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding.***
Denied October 18. Request for Individual Assistance for multiple counties and Hazard Mitigation for all counties.
- ***Commonwealth of Virginia: Hurricane Jeanne.***
Approved October 18. Request for Individual Assistance and Hazard Mitigation.

KEY SPEAKING AND TRAVEL ENGAGEMENTS

Date	Location	Audience / Event	Speech
<i>Secretary Abraham</i>			
25-October	Washington, D.C.	Dr. Edward Teller Symposium	Remarks
27-October	Duluth, MN	Clean Coal Facility	Grant Announcement
28-October	TBD, WV	Political Events	Attend
29-October	TBD, NM	Political Events	Attend
30-October	TBD, NC	Political Events	Attend

<i>Attorney General Ashcroft</i>			
25-October	New York, NY	Recording Industry Association of America	Remarks
<i>Secretary Chao</i>			
25-October	St. Louis, MO	National Emergency Grant; Political Event	Grant Announcement; Remarks
27-October	Tampa, FL	Broadband and Verizon Event	Jobs Creation Announcement
28-October	Lisbon, OH	National Emergency Grant(T)	Grant Announcement
29-October	Charleston, WV	National Emergency Grant	Grant Announcement
<i>Secretary Evans</i>			
25-October	Lima, OH	Political Events	Attend
25-October	Columbus, OH	Broadband and Jobs Announcement	Remarks
28-October	TBD, WV	Political Events (T)	Travel
29-October	Albuquerque, NM	Political Events (T)	Travel
30-October	TBD, NC	Political Events (T)	Travel
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<i>Secretary Jackson</i>			
25-26 October	San Francisco, CA	Mortgage Bankers Association	Speech
27-October	St. Joseph/ Kalamazoo/MI; Madison, WI	Political Events	Remarks
<i>Administrator Leavitt</i>			
25-October	Hershey, PA	Annual Executive Leadership Conference	Remarks
26-October	Gardnerville/ Boulder City, NV	Children's Health Event at Pau Wa Lu School; Recycling Event; Black Canyon Performance Track Event	Remarks
26-27 October	Grand Canyon, AZ	Grand Canyon Performance Track Event	Remarks
27-October	Phoenix/Tucson, AZ	Clean Air Event; Clean School Bus Event for Tucson Unified School District	Remarks
27-28 October	Las Cruces/ Albuquerque, NM	City Officials Meeting; Vado Water Treatment Plant; Picacho Middle School Event; Tribal Governors' Event at Pueblo Culture Center	Meeting; Tour; Remarks
29-October	TBD, WA	Region 10 Visit	Travel

<i>Secretary Mineta</i>			
25-October	Stamford/Bridgeport, CT	Intermodal Event with Rep. Shays (R-CT)	Travel
26-October	Washington, D.C.	Diversity Best Practices Award Recipient	Remarks
28-October	Washington, D.C.	War Stories with Oliver North	Interview
<i>Secretary Norton</i>			
25-October	Columbus, OH	Sportsmen Breakfast	Remarks
25-October	Jackson Center, OH	Airstream Trailer and Recreational Vehicle Plant	Tour
26-October	Fond du Lac, WI	Mercury Outboard Motor Factory	Tour
26-October	Las Vegas, NV	Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act Event	Remarks
27-October	Albuquerque, NM	Dedication of a new American Indian Training Center	Remarks
28-October-1-November	TBD, CO	Political Events	Travel
<i>Secretary Paige</i>			
28-October	Washington, D.C.	Catholic University 25 th Anniversary Events	Speech
29-October	Washington, D.C.	National Association of Elementary School Principals	Remarks

<i>Secretary Powell</i>			
25-26 October	Seoul, South Korea; Tokyo, Japan; Beijing, China	Meeting with Asian Foreign Ministers	Remarks
27-October	Washington, D.C.	Address New Class of WH Fellows; Award for Corporate Excellence Ceremony	Remarks
28-October	Ft. McNair, VA	National War College	Remarks
<i>Secretary Principi</i>			
25-26 October	San Diego, CA	50th Anniversary of the Supreme Sacrifice of Men of Taffy III	Speech
27-October	Washington, D.C.	National Guard Magazine	Interview
28-October	Staten Island, NY	Re-Dedication Ceremony of Staten Island Veteran American Community Health Center	Speech
28-October	Syracuse, NY	Press Announcement at Syracuse Medical Center (T)	Remarks
<i>Secretary Ridge</i>			
26-October	Philadelphia, PA	Media Seminar; Coast Guard Visit; United States Secret Service Visit	Remarks

Secretary Snow

25-October	Portland, OR	Roundtable with Business Leaders	Meeting
26-October	Minneapolis, MN	Roundtable with Business Leaders	Meeting
27 October	Cedar Rapids, IA	Roundtable with Business Leaders	Meeting
27-28 October	Wilkes-Barre/ Scranton, PA	Roundtable with Business Leaders	Meeting
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Secretary Thompson

25-October	TBD, WI	Political Events	Travel
26-October	TBD, WI	Political Events	Tentative Travel
28-October	Ft. Walton/ Gainesville/ Miami, FL	Political Events	Travel
29-October	TBD, WI; TBD, IA	Political Events	Travel
30-October	TBD, WI	Political Events	Travel

Secretary Veneman

25-October	Greensboro, NC	U.S. Animal Health Association Convention; Women in Agriculture Conference	Remarks; Conservation Announcement
25-October	Bethesda, MD	National Obesity Prevention Conference	Remarks

26-27 October	Worthington/ Mankato/ Rochester, MN	Political Event	Attend
27-28 October	Louisville, KY	National Future Farmers of America Convention to Receive Distinguished Service Award for USDA	Remarks
29-October	Casa Grande, AZ	Farmer Event with Rep. Renzi (R-AZ)	Roundtable
29-30 October	Long Island, NY	Political Event	Remarks

CABINET REPORT

For the Week of October 18, 2004

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

- ***Secretary Veneman to Address Annual Conference of National FFA Organization.***
On October 28, the Secretary will address the annual conference of the National FFA Organization (formerly known as Future Farmers of America) in Louisville, Kentucky. She will discuss the importance of leadership and announce an agreement for developing career enhancement opportunities for youth in natural resource related careers. She will also accept the Distinguished Service Award on behalf of the Department.

Press Activity:

- ***Secretary Veneman to Host “Radio Bridge” with Farm Broadcasters.***
On October 22, the Secretary will host a “radio bridge,” which is similar to a conference call, with farm broadcasters. In addition to fielding questions, she will announce that OMB has apportioned \$1.8 billion in FY 2005 funds for conservation programs several months early; the release of over \$2 billion in counter-cyclical program payments to farmers, which provides support in the event of low crop prices; and \$19.8 million in Risk Management Partnership Agreements with universities, states, and third-party organizations, which provides educational and training tools to farmers for managing operational risk. These announcements are expected to receive positive coverage.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

- ***Department to Participate in Groundbreaking Event in Florida with Governor Bush.***
On October 25, Assistant Secretary for Economic Development David Sampson and Governor Bush will participate in a groundbreaking ceremony for the expansion of the Goodwill Industries of Southern Florida facility in Miami, Florida. The Economic Development Administration invested \$2.5 million in Goodwill Industries that will renovate and expand its existing manufacturing, production, and distribution facility. The renovated facility will be used to manufacture military fatigues, flak jackets, uniforms, and flag embroidery. It is estimated that 400 short-term and 1,800 long-term jobs will be created.
- ***Department to Present \$1 Million Economic Development Check in Florida.***
On October 25, Assistant Secretary for Economic Development David Sampson and U.S. Congressman Dave Weldon (R-FL) will present a \$1 million investment check to the Technological Research and Development Authority in Titusville, Florida. The investment will help build a business incubator serving private industry located at the airport industrial park in Titusville. This investment is expected to help create 135 new jobs.
- ***Upcoming Economic Indicator Releases from Commerce.***
Gross Domestic Product: Q3 2004 (advance) (October 29)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- ***Training Conference on Rehabilitation Education to be Held in Washington, D.C..***
From October 24 to 26, the National Training Conference on Rehabilitation Education will be held in Washington, D.C. The Conference is co-sponsored by the Department's Rehabilitation Services Administration, the National Council on Rehabilitation Education, and the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- ***Deputy Secretary Hickok to visit Nevada Elementary School.***
On October 27, the Deputy Secretary and Congressman Jim Gibbons (R-NV) will visit Kate Smith Elementary School in Sparks, Nevada. During this visit, the Deputy Secretary will tour the school, read to kindergarten students, and answer questions from third-graders.
- ***2004 National Distinguished Principal Awards Ceremony to be Held in Washington, D.C.***
On October 29, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) will hold its annual National Distinguished Principal Awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. The National Distinguished Principals Program was established to honor exemplary elementary and middle school principals. The program is jointly sponsored by the Department and insurance company AIG. This year's winner is Dr. Carolyn Johnston of Fruitland Primary School in Fruitland, Maryland, whom you met in the Diplomatic Reception Room on September 9.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

- ***Department Project Advances Science of Mercury Capture in Low Rank Coal.***
In cooperation with the National Energy Technology Laboratory, a project team led by Reaction Engineering International of Salt Lake City, Utah, has recently developed a preliminary rate equation for mercury oxidation across a selective catalytic reduction (SCR) unit. Since mercury from low rank coal is hard to capture, and oxidized mercury is easier to capture, these findings may enhance mercury capture from coals for units that include SCR. The finding has important implications for multi-pollutant control under the Clear Skies Initiative. Approximately one-third of all coal-fired power plants in the U.S. are expected to have SCR installed within the next five years.
- ***Department Selects Five NO_x Control Projects to Combat Acid Rain and Smog.***
Five projects were recently selected from among 20 proposals submitted in response to a solicitation for technologies that will meet the stringent nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emissions targets of the Clear Skies Initiative and EPA's Clean Air Interstate Rule Title I (formerly the Interstate Air Quality Rule). Under the Office of Fossil Energy Pollution Control Innovations program, the Department will contribute \$3 million of the \$4.3 million total value of the projects. The technologies are suited to smaller, older facilities (66 percent of the domestic fleet) that are not easily retrofit with state-of-the-art selective catalytic reduction (SCR) units. It is estimated that the technologies to be developed in these projects could prevent an aggregate capital expenditure of \$2 billion associated with SCR unit installations at such facilities.

- ***Department to Participate in Power India 2004.***

On October 26, the Office of Fossil Energy will be delivering a presentation at the Power India 2004 conference in Mumbai, India on Indo-U.S. cooperation in coal and power. Based upon a November 2001 agreement between you and India Prime Minister Vajpayee, a bilateral “Coal Advisory Group” was created to identify areas for potential cooperation and make recommendations for the elimination of barriers to the efficient, economic, and environmentally acceptable use of coal for power generation. The presentation will be followed by a site visit to the Nagpur coal washery in Madhya Pradesh to determine the feasibility of using that site as a demonstration of power from the reprocessed coal.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

- ***Chesapeake Bay Panel to Recommend Options to Finance Bay Restoration.***

On October 27, the Chesapeake Bay Blue Ribbon Finance Panel will announce their recommendations for financing restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. The panel was established to develop innovative solutions for financing the multi-billion dollar effort to restore water quality by 2010. The preliminary estimate for this effort is about \$28 billion in upfront capital costs and \$2.7 billion each year thereafter. Mixed regional media attention is anticipated.

- ***U.S. and Canada to Release Air Quality Agreement 2004 Progress Report.***

This week, the U.S.-Canada Air Quality Report will be released jointly by EPA and Environment Canada (the Canadian equivalent of the U.S. EPA). The report is a routine update produced every two years to describe progress on emission reduction commitments, which highlights cooperation between the U.S. and Canada on trans-boundary air pollution issues, including acid rain and ozone. Release of the report is not expected to generate significant attention since most of the data has already been included in previously released reports.

- ***EPA to Release Survey on Children’s Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke.***

This week, EPA will release the results of the National Survey on Environmental Management of Asthma and Children’s Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) as part of Children’s Health Month. The results of the survey show that excellent progress is being made; however, many in the public are still not taking recommended actions to stop exposing their children to ETS. Positive trade press coverage is anticipated.

Press Activity:

- ***Lead Poisoning Prevention Week.***

This week, Federal, state, and local governments along with non-profit organizations will participate in the sixth annual Lead Poisoning Prevention Week. EPA is partnering with other government agencies and organizations to highlight the importance of lead poisoning prevention. Events being held across the country include free blood-lead tests for children, and education and outreach efforts for families, including health fairs and workshops on lead education and safety.

- ***Wall Street Journal on Perchlorate.***

This week, the *Wall Street Journal* is expected to run a story regarding perchlorate, the primary ingredient of solid rocket propellant. The article is likely to highlight the disparity between EPA and Department of Defense positions on the health implications of perchlorate ingestion from drinking water, as well as the best approach for clean-up of improperly disposed perchlorate in soil and water. The tone of the article is anticipated to be negative.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- ***CMS Administrator McClellan to Speak at Town Hall Meeting in Ohio.***

On October 25, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator McClellan is scheduled to speak at a town hall meeting in Cleveland, Ohio hosted by Senator George Voinovich (R-OH). The Administrator will highlight the implementation and successes of the Medicare Modernization Act.

- ***Department to Publish Hispanic Child Care Providers Brochure.***

On October 27, the Department will publish a brochure entitled, "What Providers Should Know about Child Care Assistance to Families – A Target Effort to Reach Hispanic Families and Providers." The brochure, available in English and Spanish, is an effort to increase child care subsidy participation in underserved populations by providing information on how to access the system. The initial distribution of this brochure will occur at the First National Child Health and Child Welfare Conference to be held October 27 through 29 in Washington, D.C.

Press Activity:

- ***Agency for Healthcare Research Quality Studies in New England Journal of Medicine.***

On October 28, two studies sponsored by the Agency for Healthcare Research Quality (AHRQ) will be published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The first study is entitled, "The Intern Sleep and Patient Safety Study: Effect of Eliminating Extended Duration Work Shifts and Reducing Weekly Work Hours on Serious Medical Errors in Intensive Care Units," and the second study is entitled "The Intern Sleep and Patient Safety Study: Effect of Eliminating Extended Duration Work Shifts and Reducing Weekly Work Hours on Sleep and Attentional Failures." The first study found that changing traditional extended duration work shifts (80-plus hours per week) so that medical interns have a night off to sleep resulted in a dramatic drop in medical errors in the intensive care unit. The second study revealed that interns working the traditional schedule made 22 percent more serious errors than those working the new schedule.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

- ***Department to Conduct Integrated Incident Management Seminar.***

From October 25 to 29, the Department will conduct an Integrated Incident Management Seminar in Washington, D.C. The seminar is designed to increase overall understanding of requirements, resources, and shortfalls for integrated operations and emergency response. It

will also promote the principles outlined in the National Response Plan and the National Incident Management System related to requirements for intergovernmental coordination to include authorities, concepts, and relationships. Secretary Ridge will deliver opening remarks.

- ***Department to Publish Air Cargo Security Requirements Regulation.***

On October 29, the Air Cargo Security Requirements regulation is expected to be published in the *Federal Register*. The regulation will enhance air cargo security by codifying security directives requirements, imposing new requirements on shippers, aircraft operators, and air carriers, and creating an enhanced security regime for large cargo aircraft. The regulation is in final clearance at the OMB.

- ***Department to Publish Commercial Drivers Regulation.***

On October 29, the Security Threat Assessment for Individuals Applying for a Hazardous Materials Endorsement for Commercial Drivers regulation is expected to be published in the *Federal Register*, pending OMB clearance. The regulation will establish the fee associated with collecting fingerprints and conducting security threat assessments for those applying for a license and will also outline the individual qualifications needed to obtain one. The regulation gives states the option of collecting fingerprints themselves for submission to the FBI or having the Transportation Security Administration handle the collecting of fingerprints and performing threat assessments. The Department expects to begin implementation of the regulation by January 31, 2005.

Press Activity:

- ***Secretary Ridge to Participate in a Media Roundtable and Radio Interviews.***

On October 26, the Secretary will participate in a media roundtable at WHYY-TV in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The topic of discussion will be the role of the media during a national terror incident. He will also participate in interviews with several radio stations. The interviews will be broadcast locally and nationwide, and the topic of discussion will be current threat information and general homeland security issues.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

- ***Secretary Jackson Delivered Remarks at Homeownership Event in Ohio.***

On October 22, the Secretary discussed the Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership program at a homeownership event in Columbus, Ohio. He also announced the award of approximately \$788 million in 202 grants (supportive housing for the elderly) and 811 grants (supportive housing to persons with disabilities) to be allotted nationwide. Nearly \$37 million of these funds will be allotted to the State of Ohio. Congressmen Robert Ney (R-OH), Michael Oxley (R-OH), and Patrick Tiberi (R-OH) participated in this event.

- ***National Association of Realtors to Release Existing Home Sales Data.***

On October 25, the National Association of Realtors will release Existing Home Sales data for the month of September. This data is the primary measurement of the health of the residential real estate industry. Each month, statistics on sales of existing single-family homes are reported at the national and four regional levels.

- ***Deputy Secretary Bernardi to Announce Brownfields Grants in Ohio.***

On October 25, the Deputy Secretary will travel to Bedsford, Ohio to announce \$2 million in Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) grants to Cuyahoga County. The BEDI program is a key competitive grant program designed to stimulate and promote economic and community development. It assists cities with the redevelopment of abandoned, idled, and underused industrial and commercial facilities where expansion and redevelopment is burdened by real or potential environmental contamination. Congressman Michael DeWine (R-OH) is scheduled to participate in this event.

Press Activity:

- ***Secretary Jackson and Secretary Paige Continue No Child Left Behind Tour.***

In light of the six-city outreach effort to educate low-income Americans about the benefits of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Secretaries Jackson and Paige have written two op-eds on their reasoning for the tour and parental rights ensured under NCLB. The op-eds emphasize that a quality education is the most important tool needed to reach the American dream. One appeared in *The Washington Times* on October 20, and another is slated to appear in *The Chicago Sun-Times* early next week.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

- ***Department to Help Launch “Take Pride in Florida” Program.***

On October 23, the Department’s “Take Pride in America” program will join with the State of Florida to launch “Take Pride in Florida” at Honeymoon Island State Park in Dunedin, Florida. The initiative will encourage Floridians to give back to their public lands and waters. National Park Service Director Fran Mainella, “Take Pride in America” Executive Director Marti Allbright, and Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Colleen Castille will participate in this event.

- ***Secretary Norton to Focus on Sportsman and Recreation Industry in Ohio and Wisconsin.***

On October 25, the Secretary will join local and national sportsmen for a breakfast meeting in Columbus, Ohio. She will report on Department actions to open up a number of national wildlife refuges to hunting and fishing as well as conservation issues of interest to hunters and fisherman. On October 26, she will tour the Mercury outboard motor factory that employs approximately 3,400 people in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Following the tour, she will meet with employees and local community leaders. This will be an open press event.

- ***Secretary Norton to Participate in Indian Programs Training Center Dedication.***

On October 27, the Secretary will join Senator Pete Domenici (R-NM) in a ground-breaking ceremony for the National Indian Programs Training Center and the dedication of the Pete V. Domenici Indian Affairs Building on Pueblo land in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She and the Senator will be joined by 19 Pueblo Governors of the All Indian Pueblo Council. Up to 800 people are expected to attend this event.

Press Activity:

- ***Las Vegas Review Journal on Department Political Travel.***
This week, the *Las Vegas Review Journal* is expected to publish a story about the pre-election travel of Secretary Norton and other Department political appointees. The tone of the story is expected to be negative.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

- ***Bureau of Justice Statistics to Release Crime Statistics.***
On October 27, the Bureau of Justice Statistics will release the report, Crime in the Nation's Households. The report indicates that from 2002 to 2003, the percentage of U.S. households that experienced a violent crime fell from 3.2 percent to 3.0 percent. Some minimal national press coverage is expected, though the report's findings will likely be overshadowed by the FBI's Uniform Crime Report release earlier in the week.
- ***United States v. APAC-Missouri, Inc. and Donald G. "Donnie" Mantle.***
On October 25, this trial will begin in the Western District of Missouri. The defendants were indicted on August 11 for rigging a highway construction bid. Mr. Mantle is the former vice president of APAC-Missouri, Inc., a Missouri highway construction company, which is a subsidiary of APAC, Inc., the Nation's largest asphalt and concrete paving company.

Press Activity:

- ***PATRIOT Act Op-Ed.***
The Department of Justice is coordinating placement of an op-ed with *The Wallstreet Journal* on the USA PATRIOT Act. The third anniversary of the Act is October 26.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

- ***Department to Announce Grant to St. Louis Carpenters Apprenticeship Program.***
On October 25, the Department will announce a \$2.1 million grant to the St. Louis Carpenters Joint Apprenticeship Program under the High Growth Job Training Initiative to prepare workers for skilled jobs in the construction sector. The grant will support the training and licensing of 24 high school instructors and create an eight-week maintenance technician training program for dislocated workers. Secretary Chao will make this announcement in St. Louis, Missouri.
- ***Department to Award Contract to Stolar Research Corporation.***
On October 25, the Department will award a research and development contract to the Stolar Research Corporation in the amount of \$1,395,000. The award will be used to help develop a system to detect voids in underground mines. Mine Safety and Health Administration Assistant Secretary Dave Lauriski will award this contract in Raton, New Mexico.
- ***Department's Faith-Based Director to Participate in Prisoner Re-Entry Conference.***
On October 26, the Department's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Executive Director Brent Orrell will participate in a panel discussion at a Prisoner Re-Entry

Conference hosted by Governor Bob Taft (R) in Columbus, Ohio. Executive Director Orrell will discuss your Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative and the Department's Ready4Work program.

- ***Department to Announce \$6 Million National Emergency Grant for West Virginia.***
On October 27, the Department will announce a \$6 million National Emergency Grant for the State of West Virginia. The funds will be used to provide temporary jobs for workers dislocated by recent hurricanes. Secretary Chao will make the announcement in Charleston, West Virginia.
- ***Bureau of Labor Statistics to Release Employment Cost Index.***
On October 29, the Bureau of Labor Statistics will release the Employment Cost Index (ECI) for September. The ECI measures quarterly changes in compensation costs, which include wages, salaries, and employer costs for employee benefits for non-farm private, and State and local government workers.

NASA

- ***NASA to Launch Demonstration of Autonomous Rendezvous Technology Spacecraft.***
On October 26, NASA will launch their Demonstration of Autonomous Rendezvous Technology (DART) spacecraft from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. DART will demonstrate key technologies required for spacecraft to rendezvous with other craft, such as satellites, without human intervention. DART is the first demonstration program selected by the NASA Exploration Systems Mission Directorate to develop technologies for the Vision for Space Exploration.
- ***Cassini Spacecraft to Closely Examine Saturn Moon Titan.***
On October 26, the *Cassini* spacecraft will examine Saturn's smog-cloaked moon Titan. *Cassini* will cruise by Titan at 745 miles. In this close-up flyby, which is about 250 times closer than its flyby in July, *Cassini* will use its radar to image the cloud-shrouded Titan for the first time.

OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY

- ***ONDCP to Release National Synthetic Drugs Action Plan in Missouri.***
On October 25, Director Walters will join Senator Kit Bond (R-MO), Senator James Talent (R-MO), House Majority Whip Roy Blunt (R-MO), and Drug Enforcement Administration Administrator Karen Tandy in Springfield to release the National Synthetic Drugs Action Plan, which lays out strategies for controlling methamphetamine, ecstasy, and prescription drugs. The Director and Congressman Blunt will then travel to Joplin to meet with local officials and families affected by methamphetamine abuse. While in Joplin, the Director will also participate in an interview with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.
- ***ONDCP to Announce New Drug-Free Communities Grantees in Florida.***
On October 26 and 27, Director Walters will announce new Drug-Free Communities grantees at press conferences in Palatka, St. Augustine, and Tampa. In Palatka and St.

Augustine, the Director will be joined by Congressman John Mica (R-FL) who represents the grantees. In Tampa, the focus will be on the city's participation in the 25-Cities Initiative, which brings together prevention, law enforcement, drug treatment providers, and local elected officials.

- ***Director Walters to Address Teen Challenge Annual Conference in Wisconsin.***
On October 29, Director Walters will deliver the keynote address to Teen Challenge, a national faith-based drug treatment and prevention program in Milwaukee. While in Wisconsin, the Director will hold press conferences with local prevention groups, treatment providers, and law enforcement officials in Milwaukee and Green Bay to announce new Drug-Free Communities grantees.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

- ***U.S. to Participate in Proliferation Security Initiative Maritime Interdiction Exercise.***
From October 25 through 27, Japan will host a regional Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) exercise off Tokyo Bay. In addition to Japan, the U.S., Australia and France will contribute operational assets. The U.S. and more than 15 other nations will send observers. China and South Korea, countries that have not publicly endorsed the PSI, have indicated that they will not participate out of concern that it could exacerbate tensions with North Korea. India declined to participate in the exercise, though it may send an observer.
- ***Secretary Powell to Present Annual Award for Corporate Excellence.***
On October 27, the Secretary will present the sixth annual Secretary of State's Awards for Corporate Excellence (ACE). The award is designed to recognize the important role that U.S. businesses play in advancing good corporate governance and democratic principles worldwide. The 2004 ACE winners, embargoed until announcement, are: in the small business category – FIJI Water, headquartered in Basalt, Colorado, for its work in Fiji; and in the multinational enterprise category – Motorola, Inc., headquartered in Schaumburg, Illinois, for its efforts in Brazil.
- ***Department to Participate in 12th U.S.-Russia Counterterrorism Working Group Session.***
On October 27, the 12th session of the U.S.-Russia Counterterrorism Working Group will meet in Moscow. The U.S. delegation will be led by Deputy Secretary Armitage. The U.S. objective is to strengthen counterterrorism cooperation with Russia in the areas of preventing chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons proliferation; improving law enforcement and intelligence cooperation; and coordinating efforts to build political will and capacity among partner nations in the global war on terrorism.

- ***Coronation of Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni.***
On October 29, the new King of Cambodia, Norodom Sihamoni, will formally ascend the throne in a coronation ceremony. After a formal invitation is received, the decision will then be made as to who will represent the U.S. based on other country representatives.
- ***Iraqi Students and Scholars Considered for 2005-2006 Fulbright Program.***
This week, the Public Affairs Section at Embassy Baghdad and a bi-national committee of Iraqis and Americans will review 280 applications from Iraqi students and scholars for the 2005-2006 Fulbright Program. Approximately 30 Iraqis will be awarded Fulbright Scholarships.

Press Activity:

- ***Wide Placement of Secretary Powell Op-Ed on Afghan Elections.***
An op-ed by the Secretary, entitled "Democracy Rises in Afghanistan," which was pitched to both domestic and international publications beginning the week of October 7, was successfully placed in 28 newspapers and two Internet sites around the world.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

- ***Department to Announce \$1 Million in Emergency Relief Funding in Pennsylvania.***
On October 27, Deputy Secretary van Tine will tour hurricane and flood damage in central Pennsylvania, and announce \$1.05 million in emergency relief funding to repair damage to state roads in Monroe and Lackawanna counties. The funds include \$800,000 for repairs to State Road 115 near Blakeslee in Monroe County, and \$250,000 for State Road 502 near Scranton in Lackawanna County. The Federal Highway Administration recently announced \$494,000 in the Pittsburgh area to repair roads damaged by Hurricane Ivan.
- ***Department to Announce Agreement for Cruise Ship Terminal in New Orleans.***
On October 27, Maritime Administrator William Schubert will sign an agreement with the Port of New Orleans to facilitate the construction of a new cruise ship terminal. The agreement will exchange a wharf currently owned by the Maritime Administration (MARAD) for one owned by the Port of New Orleans. The agreement will result in expanded dock facilities for MARAD, while the Port will gain access to MARAD's current docks, which are located downriver from the Mississippi River Bridge. Larger cruise ships cannot clear the Bridge; thus, a downriver terminal is expected to expand the already growing cruise ship traffic in the city.
- ***Inspector General to Release Assessment of Amtrak's Financial Performance.***
On October 28, the Inspector General will issue its congressionally required annual assessment of Amtrak's financial performance and needs. The report will review Amtrak's financial performance in 2003 as well as 2004 year-to-date. It will also provide initial observations on Amtrak's 2005 grant request.

Press Activity:

- ***New York Times on Alcohol Intervention in the Emergency Room.***
This week, a positive article on the issue of alcohol intervention in emergency rooms, which includes an October 12 interview with National Highway Traffic Safety Administrator Jeff Runge, is expected to be published in *The New York Times*.
- ***WashingtonPost.com Online Chat on Motorcycle Safety.***
On October 28, staff from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) will discuss motorcycle safety issues in an online chat on *WashingtonPost.com*. This event is part of a monthly series that provides NHTSA the opportunity to address comments and questions from the public. A different traffic safety topic area is covered each month.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

- ***Deputy Secretary Bodman Discuss Healthcare in Pennsylvania.***
On October 26, the Deputy Secretary will travel to Pennsylvania and will visit the Philadelphia Mint. He will also travel to Reading, where he will participate in a business roundtable on healthcare issues at First HSA, a nationwide health savings account administration company.
- ***Secretary Snow Travels to Minnesota, Iowa, and Pennsylvania.***
From October 26 through 28, the Secretary will travel to Minneapolis, Minnesota, Cedar Rapids, Iowa and Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. In each city, he will host roundtable discussions with local business leaders, visit area small businesses, and participate in local press interviews.
- ***U.S. Mint to Launch Wisconsin Quarter.***
On October 25, U.S. Mint Director Fore and Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle (D) will celebrate the release of the Wisconsin commemorative quarter-dollar coin at the Wisconsin State Fair Park in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The Wisconsin quarter dollar coin will be the fifth quarter of 2004, and the 30th in the United States Mint's 50 State Quarters Program.
- ***Upcoming Economic Indicator Releases.***
Conference Board Consumer Confidence, October (October 26)
Beige Book (October 27)
Consumer Sentiment (Michigan), October (October 29)

UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

- ***Ambassador Zoellick to Meet with South Korean Trade Minister.***
On October 25, the Ambassador will meet with the new Minister for Trade for the Republic of Korea, Hyun Chong Kim, to discuss bilateral trade issues. In 2003, the U.S. exports to South Korea were worth more than \$24 billion, making them the seventh largest trading partner of the U.S.

- ***U.S.-Andean Free Trade Negotiations Underway.***

From October 25 to 29, the U.S. and the Andean nations of Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru will hold the fifth round of free trade negotiations in Guayaquil, Ecuador. Last year, these three countries imported \$7 billion in goods from the U.S. Once all pending free trade agreements with Latin America are enacted, the U.S. will have secured the benefits of free trade for two-thirds of the Americas' non-U.S. gross domestic product.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

- ***Staten Island Health Care Center to be Re-Dedicated.***

On October 28, the Staten Island VA Community Health Center in Staten Island, New York, will be re-dedicated. The new facility will feature roughly 6,600 square feet of clinic space, more than double the amount of the former facility. Secretary Principi, Congressman Vito Fossella (R-NY) and Staten Island Borough President James Molinaro will deliver remarks. While in New York, Secretary Principi will also conduct an interview with a cable-access program called VA Insights, which informs New York City veterans about benefits, services, and other issues important to VA program users.

- ***Department to Open VA Facility in Syracuse, New York.***

On October 28, Secretary Principi will travel to Syracuse, New York, to make a joint announcement with U.S. Congressman James T. Walsh (R-NY), regarding recently approved funding for a new VA facility, the Center for Integrated Healthcare, to be headquartered in Syracuse, New York. Healthcare providers will travel from the Center to various VA sites around the northern New York area to deliver mental health services to veterans.

- ***Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense to Conduct Joint Strategic Planning.***

On October 28, Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense senior leaders making up the Strategic Planning Council will hold a one-day retreat to update their Joint Strategic Plan. The plan defines the goals, objectives, implementing strategies, key milestones, and performance measures for the cooperation between the Departments in the areas of governance, health care, information technology, business management, and emergency preparedness. The first Joint Strategic Plan was approved by the Joint Executive Council in 2002. The updated plan will address cooperative activities for the next three years.

Press Activity:

- ***Secretary Principi to Discuss VA Healthcare with National Guard Magazine.***

On October 27, the Secretary will participate in an interview with *National Guard Magazine*, which is published by the National Guard Association. He will highlight VA services to returning combat veterans, especially members of the National Guard and Reserves. The story based on this interview is scheduled to appear in December and is expected to be positive.

OTHER AGENCIES

Corporation for National and Community Service:

- ***CNCS CEO Eisner to Address Seniors Forum.***

On October 27, Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) CEO Eisner will address leaders from the fields of national service and aging to discuss ways in which national service can address the growing need of seniors who live independently. Held in Washington, D.C., the event is co-sponsored by AARP and the National Council on the Aging.

Export-Import Bank:

- ***Export-Import Bank May Enter Agreement with Maritime Administration.***

On October 26, the Board of the Export-Import Bank is tentatively scheduled to vote on a modified agreement with the Maritime Administration. The Board's action, if adopted, would modify the threshold for when U.S. exporters must use U.S. flagged vessels to ship goods to buyers overseas. The current threshold requires shipping via U.S. flagged vessels for any Export-Import Bank financed amount over \$10 million. The new threshold will be \$20 million. By moving the threshold from \$10 million to \$20 million, exporters are provided greater flexibility in determining how and when their goods can be shipped. In addition, a new initiative will be created that allows shipping related costs to be offered under terms. Currently, the exporter generally pays shipping-related costs up front.

General Services Administration:

- ***Administrator Perry to Highlight Administration Support for Small Business.***

On October 28, the Administrator will discuss the importance of supporting small business in remarks to the Alliance of Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs in Chicago, Illinois. The Congressionally mandated goal for Federal agency contracting with small business is 23 percent. Through Q3 of FY 2004, GSA exceeded that goal by reaching 43 percent, translating into \$4.3 billion worth of small business contracts.

National Endowment for the Arts:

- ***National Council on the Arts to Meet in Washington, D.C.***

From October 27 through 29, the National Council on the Arts, the Presidential advisory committee of the National Endowment for the Arts, will meet in Washington, D.C. to advise Chairman Gioia on agency programs and policies, including the acceptance or rejection of 1,350 applications in the first round of grants for FY 2005. The National Council on the Arts consists of six Members of Congress and 14 private citizens appointed by you and confirmed by the Senate.

National Endowment for the Humanities:

- ***NEH Chairman Cole to Participate in Texas Book Festival.***

On October 29, the Chairman will participate in a panel discussion at the Texas Book Festival in Austin. He will highlight the contribution of publicly funded arts to society and

will deliver remarks at the Humanities Texas 30th Anniversary Luncheon. The First Lady serves as Honorary Chairwoman of the Festival.

Office of Personnel Management:

- ***OPM and Defense Security Service Working to Finalize Transfer.***
This week, OPM and DOD's Defense Security Service (DSS) may reach a final agreement on the transfer of DSS to OPM. The transfer would consolidate under OPM approximately 90 to 95 percent of personnel investigations conducted by the Federal government on applicants, employees, and contractors. In order to affect this transfer, DOD is required to send a Letter of Certification to its Congressional authorizing committees. The terms of this letter, which certifies that DOD's programmatic needs can be met by OPM, are still being negotiated.

Peace Corps:

- ***Peace Corps Public Service Announcement Airing on NBC.***
This week, NBC will air a 30-second public service announcement on the founding of the Peace Corps as part of a series entitled, "Democracy Works." Highlighting 10 great historical moments in American history, NBC will air this series through November 2.

Small Business Administration:

- ***Administrator Barreto to Visit New Hampshire and Pennsylvania.***
From October 25 through 26, the Administrator will travel to New Hampshire and Pennsylvania to discuss your small business agenda. In Portsmouth, he will participate in an editorial board meeting with the *Portsmouth Herald* and a roundtable discussion with local small business owners. In Pittsburgh, he will participate in local media interviews, a roundtable discussion with local small business owners, and speak at a luncheon hosted by the African American Chamber of Commerce.

Social Security Administration:

- ***Commissioner Barnhart to Participate in Social Security Management Conference.***
On October 26, the Commissioner will participate in the 35th Annual Meeting of the National Council of Social Security Management Associations (NCSSMA) in Providence, Rhode Island. This group represents the national leadership of local professional organizations made up of Social Security Administration managers and supervisors. The Commissioner will discuss Agency priorities.

USAID:

- ***Administrator Natsios to Address Conference of Arab Non-Governmental Organizations.***
On October 25, the Administrator will address the USAID-sponsored Middle Eastern Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Summit for Peace and Prosperity in Washington, D.C. The conference will bring together Arab NGOs to discuss U.S. support for Middle East peace

initiatives. The Administrator's remarks will focus on the recent election in Afghanistan, USAID humanitarian efforts in Sudan, and reconstruction efforts in Iraq.