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OPM Director Addresses the Need to Create a World Class Work Force

Washington, D.C. - Today at the Excellence in Government 2002 conference, the Director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Kay Coles James, spoke of her strong commitment to creating a federal work force that will be able to meet the challenges faced during these times when the defense of our homeland "so demands it."

"My responsibility is to the dedicated public servants - the men and women who secure our borders, protect our transportation systems, investigate terrorist organizations, respond to emergencies, and protect us against biological agents - to give them a world class organization...an organization that is as focused and committed to protecting our homeland as they are," said James.

James received applause when she addressed the reality that federal employees will not lose the securities they deserve. "Employees can expect to be treated with respect and compensated appropriately," she said. "And they will be protected when they disclose waste, fraud and abuse through whistleblower protections; receive Veterans Employment Preference; be covered by generally applicable employment laws such as the Civil Rights Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Social Security Act, government ethics standards and Hatch Act restrictions on political activities; and participate within collective bargaining agreements."

Speaking about the President's call for the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, James said that "while the mission of the new Department of Homeland Security is unique, the themes that come up in discussions of the personnel system are emblematic of the challenges confronting all of us concerned with the federal public service. For example: the need for a personnel system designed to attract and retain good people; the ability to pay them at market rates; the ability to reward exceptional contributions; and mechanisms to ensure accountability for individual performance."

As one of her final thoughts, James asked the audience to dream with her...to dream of a work force that is greater than any in the world and that can attract, recruit, manage and retain the talent we need."

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OPM oversees the federal work force and provides the American public with up-to-date employment information. OPM also supports U.S. agencies with personnel services and policy leadership including staffing tools, guidance on labor-management relations and programs to improve work force performance.

United States Office of Personnel Management

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