



NEWSLETTER

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The AUBER Newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Association for University Business and Economic Research.

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AUBER Conferences in 2006

Spring Conference

Policies to Boost Economic Growth and Security— What's Needed?

The NABE/AUBER 22nd annual policy conference will be held Monday, March 13 and Tuesday, March 14 at the Marriott Crystal City hotel at Reagan National Airport. Topics that will be addressed include mounting deficits, a burdensome tax code, growing healthcare costs, intensifying foreign competition, uncertain trade strategies, high energy prices...all issues requiring appropriate

policies to maximize economic growth and security for the nation. Get the most up-to-date information from recognized experts. The conference program includes 16 educational and 8 general sessions, and kicks off with an AUBER-sponsored reception on Sunday evening. See pages 3–5 for a preliminary program and registration information.

Meet Me in Memphis!

The Fall 2006 Conference Continues to Grow!

The fall 2006 AUBER conference in Memphis, Tennessee, promises to be one of the most exciting conferences to date. At this time, the conference planners have a majority of the program completed and have invited several prominent keynote speakers. The planners are proud to announce that Dr. William Poole and Dr. Saul Hymans have both agreed to speak at the meeting.

Dr. Poole is president and chief executive officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, directing the activities of the Bank's head office in St. Louis, as well as its three branches in Little Rock, Arkansas; Louisville, Kentucky; and Memphis, Tennessee. In addition, he represents the Bank on the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC), the Federal Reserve's chief monetary policymaking body. Dr. Poole also chairs the Conference of Presidents' Information Technology Oversight Committee. The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, one of 12 regional Reserve Banks, serves the Eighth Federal Reserve District. The regional Reserve Banks, along with the Board of Governors in Washington, D.C., constitute the Federal Reserve System. As the nation's central bank,

the Fed is responsible for conducting monetary policy, supervising banks, and operating the nation's payments mechanism.

Dr. Hymans is professor of economics and statistics and has been director of the Research Seminar in Quantitative Economics at the University of Michigan since 1981. He received the national Blue Chip Annual Economic Forecasting Award (AEFA, formerly the Silbert Award) in 1984 and 1987, and is the first person to have received the AEFA twice. Dr. Hymans currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the National Bureau of Economic Research, and as the U.S. forecaster for the Pacific Economic Outlook Project of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council.

Program chairs Paul Polzin and Pia Montoya are planning something for everyone. All the concurrent sessions will include three tracks: research dissemination, selected research and software topics, and bureau operation and administration. The host centers, the University of Memphis and the University of Arkansas, are working closely with the planners to ensure a successful program. Start making your plans now and "Meet Me in Memphis" this October!

2006 AUBER Fall Conference

October 14–17

**Holiday Inn and Fogelman Executive Center
Memphis, Tennessee**

News from the President:

What Does it Mean to be an AUBER Member?



Jerry Conover
2005–2006
AUBER President

In case you haven't noticed, the AUBER spring meeting, held in conjunction with NABE's annual policy conference, is just around the corner! I look forward to seeing many of you there, listening to lots of interesting sessions (especially those sponsored by AUBER—see the program for details), and sharing ideas and good times in our nation's capital.

In getting organized for the conference, I've been reviewing what AUBER's various committees are up to, as each one will give a report to the Board of Directors. Several have made good progress and others are still building up momentum. I won't report on all of them here, but the efforts of two of them have rekindled thoughts about the basic meaning of AUBER membership.

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee has been working to clarify language in these documents that relates to AUBER's membership provisions (among other topics). Reviewing their proposed revisions got me to thinking about the somewhat awkward structure of membership we now have in AUBER. Our members are defined as organizations, not individuals, and we've traditionally recognized one individual per organization (typically the director) as the representative of that unit, imbuing that director with voting rights, eligibility for certain offices and distinctions, and so on. Some of these privileges are not available to other active AUBER participants who happen to hold jobs other than directing their member units. Nondirector individuals ("research communicators" in the parlance of our bylaws) likely outnumber directors, though in our smallest member units this distinction is perhaps irrelevant.

I've long felt that AUBER will be most successful to the extent that it serves the needs and interests of the broad range of individuals who work in our research centers, come to our conferences, take part

in our workshops, read our newsletters, and so on. If we want membership (head count as well as unit count) to grow, AUBER must offer value to the people who get involved in it. There are lots of ways this value might be sought and appreciated, of course, ranging from informal networking to attending or presenting conference sessions to picking up ideas through organized information exchanges to getting tips on running a center or bureau to ... you get the idea. With a strong value proposition and effective recruiting efforts, we could have fall conferences attracting 150–200 registrants, representatives from almost every state, and a voice heard by national media.

Is our current membership structure optimal for encouraging participation by the broad range of individuals? Should we expand on the time-honored tradition of institutional membership in AUBER by also recognizing individuals (affiliated with those institutional units) as members? If so, how would this work—perhaps, like some associations, charge a base fee for the unit to belong, and an additional, smaller fee for each additional individual past the first one from that unit? For this to work, there would have to be a benefit of AUBER membership that only dues-paying individuals can take advantage of.

A host of interesting questions come to mind as we wrestle with these notions, questions that should prompt stimulating discussion among the Membership Committee, the Board of Directors, and the broader membership. We're working to establish an avenue of communication using web technology to facilitate discussion of these and other important AUBER issues. Please stay tuned for details, and then share your ideas with your fellow members.

See you in D.C! ▲

Jerry Conover
Indiana University

AUBER Vision Statement

To be internationally recognized by business, government, and education as the premiere professional organization dedicated to continually improving the quality, effectiveness, and application of research in business, economics, and public policy.

This report is not produced at taxpayer expense.

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Policies to Boost Economic Growth and Security—What's Needed?

March 13 and 14, 2006

Marriott Crystal City Hotel at Reagan National Airport

Sunday, March 12

5:30–6:30 PM Welcome Reception

Entertainment provided by NABE jazz musicians.
Sponsor: AUBER and NABE

Monday, March 13

8:00–8:40 AM *Setting the Policy Agenda*

Learn about the vision that ties together the various elements of the President's second-term economic agenda and why the Administration believes these initiatives are preferable to competing proposals.

Allan Hubbard, Assistant to the President for Economic Policy/Director, National Economic Council

8:45–9:45 AM *The Policy Agenda: Perspectives from Inside the Beltway and Wall Street*

The panelists will evaluate possible outcomes of the expected economic policies and initiatives as they move through Congress and will offer their perspectives on which economic policies will work and which won't.

Thomas R. Keene, Editor-at-Large, Bloomberg News, presiding

Gregory R. Valliere, Chief Strategist, Stanford Washington Research Group

Steven M. Galbraith, Principal, Maverick Capital

Henry J. Herrmann, Chief Executive Officer, Waddell & Reed Financial, Inc.

9:50–10:30 AM *The Role of the SEC in Enhancing the Functioning of U.S. Securities Markets*

Christopher Cox, Chairman, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission

10:30–5:00 PM Poster Session

10:30–11:00 AM Networking Break

11:00–12:00 Noon Concurrent Educational Sessions A
Restoring Fiscal Sanity

Panelists will discuss the desirability of, and options for, reining in government spending and the federal budget deficit.

Donald B. Marron, Acting Director, Congressional Budget Office, presiding

Isabel Sawhill, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution

Kevin A. Hassett, Director, Economic Policy Studies, American Enterprise Institute

Value-Based Purchasing and Consumer-Directed Health Care: The Third Way

Hear about recent developments in managing health-care costs.

Dean Smith, Professor of Health Management and Policy, University of Michigan, School of Public Health

Michael Chernew, Professor of Economics, University of Michigan

Stephen Parente, Assistant Professor, Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota; Principal, Health Systems Innovation Network, LLC

Economic Contribution of Immigration

Richard L. Wobbekind, Associate Dean, Leeds School of Business, University of Colorado, presiding

Thomas Tancredo, U.S. House of Representatives Speakers TBA

12:00–1:30 PM Luncheon

Enhancing Fed Credibility

The Fed, like many other central banks, greatly values its credibility—that is, the public's confidence in its commitment to price stability. In her remarks, Janet Yellen will discuss the benefits of Fed credibility, particularly through the anchoring of inflation expectations to price stability, and, looking ahead, she will consider the role of transparency, including a possible future explicit numerical inflation objective, in maintaining Fed credibility.

Janet Yellen, President, Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco

1:45–3:00 PM Concurrent Educational Sessions B

The Bernanke Fed

Greg Ip, Reporter, *Wall Street Journal*

Stuart Hoffman, Chief Economist, PNC Financial Services Group

Charles Calomiris, Professor, Columbia University

Laurence Meyer, former Fed Governor and Vice Chairman, Macroeconomic Advisers

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2006 Spring Conference Program

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Trade Policy Pitfalls and Pluses of Alternative Policy Strategies to Achieve Freer Trade

Matthew Slaughter, Member, Council of Economic Advisers

Catherine L. Mann, Senior Fellow, Institute for International Economics

Sponsor: NABE International Roundtable

Telecommunications at a Crossroads

Broadband wireline and wireless technologies are enabling the convergence of voice, data, and video services, and are creating a different landscape in the communications industry. This session will address how public policy should best facilitate growth in broadband services.

Robert W. Crandall, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution

Additional speaker TBA

Sponsor: NABE Technology Roundtable

3:00–3:30 PM Networking Break

3:30–4:45 PM Concurrent Educational Sessions C *Policy Solutions to Cost Shifting in Health Care*

Louis F. Rossiter, Professor and Director, National Center for Health Policy, William and Mary College

Deborah Chollet, Senior Fellow, Mathematica Policy Research

Richard Scheffler, Distinguished Professor of Health and Public Policy, University of California at Berkeley

Sponsor: NABE Health Economics Roundtable

Oil, Gas, and Policy Options for Energy Security

The current high prices of oil and gas have been blamed on rapid demand growth in China, geopolitical risk, 20 years of under investment, and lack of liquefied natural gas terminals. Will more investment do the trick? Or are we in for a future of scarcity and high prices, and what can be done about it?

Yorgos Papatheodorou, Director, Strategic Analysis, CH2M HILL, presiding

Charles T. Maxwell, Weeden & Co., LP

Edgard Habib, Chief Economist, Chevron Texaco Corporation

Sponsor: Regional/Utility Roundtable

China's Policy Mix: Implications for the Global Economy

Listen to experts discuss China's next policy steps and what they mean for the global economy.

Jiayi Zou, Executive Director for China, World Bank

C. Fred Bergsten, Director, Institute for International Economics

Sponsor: NABE International Roundtable

5:00–5:45 PM *Economic Policy Briefing: The Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation, Retirement Security, and Taxpayer Liability*

The PBGC plays a pivotal role in assuring the retirement security of millions of American workers, yet is also responsible to the Congress and the taxpayer. What can these covered workers expect, and what will be the likely cost to the taxpayer under the most likely best-case and worst-case scenarios? How will reform proposals now on the table affect these outcomes?

Bradley D. Belt, Executive Director, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation

Sponsor: NABE Corporate Planning Roundtable

6:00–8:00 PM Dinner

Directions for Tax Reform

The speaker will highlight the proposals of the President's advisory panel on federal tax reform and will discuss the adverse consequences of an overly complicated and loophole-ridden tax code and the economic benefits that would flow from making the system simpler, fairer, and more conducive to economic growth.

The Honorable John Breaux, Co-chair, President's Commission on Tax Reform and former senator from Louisiana

Tuesday, March 14

8:00–9:30 AM Breakfast

The speaker will provide an update on the current state and prospects for health information technology and how it will slow healthcare cost growth.

David J. Brailer, National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, U.S. Health and Human Services

9:45–10:30 AM *How Tax Reform Can Contribute to Growth and Economic Efficiency*

Martin Feldstein, Professor, Harvard University/President, National Bureau of Economic Research

10:30–11:00 AM Networking Break

11:00–12:15 PM Concurrent Educational Sessions D

The Bush Tax Cuts: End 'Em or Extend 'Em or Reform 'Em

The panelists will address the 2001–03 tax cuts, and what that experience tells us about directions for tax reform.

Steve Liesman, Senior Economic Reporter, CNBC, presiding

James Poterba, Mitsui Professor of Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

C. Eugene Steuerle, Senior Fellow, The Urban Institute

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2006 Spring Conference Program

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The IMF in a Changing World

Randall S. Kroszner, Professor of Economics,
University of Chicago, presiding

Raghuram G. Rajan, Economic Counselor/Director
of Research, International Monetary Fund

Sponsor: International Roundtable

Dealing with "Legacy" Costs in Private and Public Defined-Benefit Pension Systems

The unfunded legacy costs of past pension and health promises are a major roadblock to policy reforms. Policies for healthcare and pension funding that separate viable future commitments from such sunk costs will provide better incentives and policy outcomes. There are key benefits for investors, the taxpayer, and policymakers.

Richard B. Berner, Chief U.S. Economist, Morgan Stanley

Douglas Holtz-Eakin, Director, Maurice R.
Greenberg Center for Geoeconomic Studies,
Council on Foreign Relations

12:30–2:00 PM Luncheon

*An Alternative Perspective on Fiscal Policy
Directions*

Robert Rubin, Vice Chairman, Citigroup (Invited)

2:15–3:30 PM Concurrent Educational Sessions E

Emerging Regional Issues

*"The Real Estate Market Has Peaked...So What's
Next?"*

James Diffley, Group Managing Director, U.S.
Regional Services, Global Insight

*"Exuberance: Is it Rational or Irrational in the Las
Vegas Housing Market?"*

Keith Schwer, Director, Center for Business and
Economic Research, University of Nevada Las
Vegas

*"Manufacturing in the Midwest: The Good, the Bad,
and the Ugly"*

William Strauss, Senior Economist/Economic
Advisor, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago

Sponsor: NABE Regional/Utility Roundtable

Energy Policy: The Nascent Role of Environmental Finance and Climate Exchanges in Achieving Energy and Environmental Security

With the issue of global warming and CO2 emissions looming large, the question arises: How can we have both energy and environmental security? Investment banks like JPMorgan and Goldman Sachs, as well as GE and Ford, are launching environmental initiatives given the "sustainability" imperative. Any meaningful reduction in emissions would need significant financial, technological, and economic adjustments. The dilemmas are clear, but what are the policy choices and their implications?

Mindy S. Lubber, President, Ceres

Hans Tammemagi, Canadian Centre for Energy
Information

Structural Adjustments in Developed Economies: Competitiveness Metrics and Policies for Industries in Transition

The session will analyze differences in U.S. manufacturing costs versus offshore, focusing on total landed cost comparisons.

Lloyd C. Nace, Strategic Business Analyst, American
Standard, presiding

Daniel J. Meckstroth, Chief Economist,
Manufacturers' Alliance/MAPI Inc

Ronald C. Ritter, Expert Principal, McKinsey & Co
Sponsor: NABE Manufacturing/Industry Roundtable

3:45–5:00 PM *Skills Session: Comparing Price Measures—CPI/PPI/PCE*

Panelists will highlight the similarities, differences, and uses in both the policy and business arenas of the BLS indexes. Noting the recent narrowing of the gap between core CPI inflation and core PCE inflation, they will also point out the differences between these "preferred" consumer price measures.

Maurine Haver, President, Haver Analytics, presiding

John Greenlees, Deputy Commissioner for Price
Measurement, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Douglas W. Elmendorf, Chief, Macroeconomic
Analysis Section, Division of Research and Statistics,
Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System

Sponsors: NABE Statistics Committee and AUBER 

Missoula Conference Presentation Update

As a follow-up to the talk given by Tom Tanner, who spoke at the Missoula conference last October, it may interest AUBER members that Tom now has his online Regional Dynamics model up on the web with I-O analytics and with CGE planned for later in February. Tom invites you to go to his Regional Dynamics web site (www.REDDYN.com [<http://www.redyn.com/>](http://www.redyn.com/) or www.REDDYN.net [<http://www.redyn.net/>](http://www.redyn.net/)) to look around the Home and Learn More tabs. Within Learn More, the user introduction subtab has background materials, and the help subtab has items useful for understanding and running the model. The Subscribe tab is for signing up for a free online demo account, which Tom invites you to do. He's very interested in feedback, if people have a moment. His e-mail address is Tom@redyn.com, and his telephone number is 706-542-6271 at the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute.

Conference Registration

Contact NABE for conference registration at 202-463-6223, fax 202-463-6239, e-mail nabe@nabe.com, or www.nabe.com. The registration fee is \$445 for AUBER members.

For reservations at the Marriott Crystal City hotel at Reagan National Airport, please call 800-228-9290. A block of rooms has been reserved for a special rate of \$169 per night single/double. Be sure to mention that you are attending the NABE 2006 Policy Conference to receive the special room rate.

News from COPAFS

COPAFS held its quarterly meeting at the Bureau of Labor Statistics building on December 10, 2005, with the primary focus on testimony from various statistical agencies regarding the impact the Gulf Coast hurricanes have had on their work (see related article).

Morning Sessions: Budgets, Standards, and Census

The morning sessions consisted of three sets of presentations, which are abstracted for AUBER members below: The Executive Director's Report, an OMB report on proposed revisions to federal guidelines for statistical surveys, and an "update from the hill" regarding the progress and prospects for Census 2010.

1. Ed Spar, *Executive Director's Report*

- Budget update for statistical agencies. The Census Bureau received a favorable appropriation (so far), while the budgets for Labor, Health and Education remained in no-man's-land as their appropriation bill was voted down in December. As we have heard before, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics has been dealt a significant budget reduction that will affect its survey activities. It is still without a director. Finally, budget suspense remains for the spring as there may be a decision or some other type of across-the-board cuts to be absorbed by all agencies.
- Possible American Community Survey (ACS) question on "field of study." The National Science Foundation pushed for, and almost got, the addition of a "field of study" question to the ACS. Census Bureau and OMB rules require that such additions go through Congress, but somehow this one was being introduced through the NASA budget.
- Immigration statistics. While researchers have been generally pleased with the increasing statistical reporting activity of the Office of Immigration Statistics, concern has been expressed about the recent transfer of the agency to the policy area of the Department of Homeland Security.
- Citizens and reapportionment? Representative Candice Miller (R-MI) has proposed a constitutional amendment to require that the census only count U.S. citizens for apportionment. A recent congressional hearing on the proposal was described by Spar as "mostly theater, but

good theater." Spar does not expect the proposal to get anywhere this year, but suggested that the issue is by no means dead. Discussions have been described as "messy," with Miller blurring the distinction between noncitizens and unauthorized aliens.

2. Brian Harris-Kojetin, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

Proposed Revisions to OMB Statistical Policy Directives 1 and 2: Standards for Statistical Surveys and Publication of Statistics

Harris-Kojetin described OMB's role in developing, overseeing, and implementing policies and standards for federal statistics, and cited recent work in this area, including revisions to the data standards on race and ethnicity, and the definition of metropolitan areas. This presentation focused on Directives 1 and 2, which establish standards for surveys and the publication of statistics. These standards were last updated around 1974, when surveys used paper and pencil methods and stored data on punch cards.

The revision process began with the formation of an interagency team as a subcommittee of the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology. This team reviewed the previous standards, and submitted proposed standards and guidelines to OMB, which were published in a Federal Register notice for public comment. The proposal includes 20 standards, or broad principles, and more detailed guidelines for survey and publication practices.

Some of the proposed standards concern survey planning, survey justification, and survey design—defining the target population sampling plan, costs, and measurement of error. Several guidelines relate to response rates and bias (for example, planning for an analysis of nonresponse bias if the expected response rate is below 80%). Harris-Kojetin described the guidelines as "shoulds rather than musts." Responding to an attendee's comment that the proposed standards have loopholes, Harris-Kojetin preferred to describe it as flexibility in how

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New Member

San Fernando Valley Economic Research Center
California State University, Northridge
Director: Dan Blake

Welcome to AUBER!

Member News

AUBER Board of Directors' member Rajeev Dhawan, director of the Robinson College of Business' Economic Forecasting Center, tops the list for most accurate GDP forecasting in the December 2005 issue of *Bloomberg Markets* magazine. Dhawan received an accuracy rating of 94.1% and was commended by the publication for being "among the few economists within the Bloomberg survey who correctly forecast a slowdown in the final three months of 2004." Congratulations, Rajeev!

COPAFS: Morning Sessions

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the standards are administered. Other standards relate to collecting data (maximize response rate and minimize respondent burden), processing and editing, evaluating, analyzing and reporting, documenting, and producing estimates and projections.

The Federal Register notice generated only about a half dozen comments from agencies and others. OMB will review and address these before releasing final standards, probably in early 2006. The proposed standards can be reviewed on the OMB web site www.whitehouse.gov/omb.

3. **John Cuaderes**, Subcommittee on Federalism and the Census, and **Terri Ann Lowenthal**, Consultant

An Update on Census 2010 from Capitol Hill

Cuaderes opened with a quick recap of the hearings the subcommittee has held to assess the hurdles facing the 2010 census, and said he expects oversight activity to ramp up during 2006. Before elaborating, Cuaderes asked if any Census Bureau staff were present. A round of chuckles answered the question as he good-naturedly promised to temper his remarks. Levity aside, the subcommittee is concerned with the planned use of new technology, such as handheld computers, as other agencies have had trouble introducing similar technologies. There is also concern that the technology requires greater reliance on private contractors. The subcommittee accepts handheld computers as a great idea, but wants to be sure that the Census Bureau can “pull this off for the 2010 census.” The subcommittee also is considering the need for a Census Monitoring Board. If one is established, Cuaderes stressed that an objective would be that it would have a “fairer makeup” than that of the 2000 Monitoring Board.

Cuaderes closed by noting that ACS funding dodged a bullet this year, but expressed his expectation that it will be another six appropriation cycles before Congress leaves the ACS alone. Until then, we can expect Congress to attack it every year. As Cuaderes put it, congressional members like the census and its data, but they vote against its budget

because it is an easy target, and the Census Bureau does not fight back. With this in mind, he encouraged the Census Bureau and stakeholders to develop strategies for educating members on the importance of the ACS and its full funding.

Lowenthal reported that the Census Project (successor to the Census 2000 Initiative) has been funded for 2006, and will continue to provide news briefs, and function as a loose coalition of census stakeholders. Given current pressures, she considers it remarkable that the final census appropriation was so close to the House mark, and credited stakeholder efforts with having an impact on the outcome. Lowenthal called on stakeholder groups to remain energized, and called on the Census Bureau to listen to the concerns of the stakeholder groups who have been so effective in going to bat for the Census Bureau's budget.

Lowenthal then commented on the proposed amendment that would exclude noncitizens from the census count, and to the ongoing debate about where to count prisoners. The Census Bureau has already dismissed the idea of counting prisoners at their preincarceration addresses, but Congress is requiring that the Census Bureau test the option, and Lowenthal expects advocacy groups to continue pushing this issue.

Cuaderes interjected that any such change in the counting of prisoners would require legislation that would have to go through the subcommittee, and that “we would oppose” that legislation. He then expressed the view that while the noncitizen amendment may go nowhere, the issue will not simply go away. Cuaderes then took the opportunity to note that the subcommittee is considering the possibility of an enhanced ACS for the hurricane impact area as Congress realizes the need to track changes in areas where so much federal money is to be spent. ▲

Paul Zelus
Idaho State University
AUBER Representative to COPAFS

Federal Agencies Affected by Katrina

The final session of the December 10, 2005, meeting of COPAFS consisted of an informative panel presentation on the impact of the recent hurricane on the statistical work of federal agencies. Discussants included the following agency representatives, who should be contacted directly with specific questions:

Carol Moylan, Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)

William Parks, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

Margot Anderson, Energy Information Administration (EIA)

Philip Ross, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Edith McArther, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Marcie Cynamon, National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)

James Weed, State of Louisiana

Ron Jarmin, U.S. Census Bureau

Carol Moylan (BEA) explained that GDP is not directly affected by the loss of property, but is indirectly affected by economic activity in response to hurricanes and other disasters. It is net domestic product that is affected (reduced) by the destruction of fixed assets. But where the reduction is reflected depends on insurance—if the property was insured, the insurance sector takes the hit. There is also a direct impact on income and corporate profits. GDP is not directly affected because these losses are offset by an increase in the “consumption of fixed capital” in the form of nonrepairable damage to structures or equipment. Moylan presented third quarter 2005 numbers showing the lack of change in GDP. A \$317.6 billion increase in the consumption of fixed capital (destruction) was offset by a \$317.6 billion decrease in national income. This loss consists of \$14 billion in proprietor income, \$68.1 billion in rental income of persons, \$151.2 billion in corporate profits, \$69.7 billion in business current transfer payments, and \$14.6 billion in surplus of government enterprises. The numbers may not explain the workings of the national accounts, but they convey the dollar magnitude of the hurricane impact.

William Parks (BLS) reviewed labor force impacts, noting that prior to the hurricanes, the 100 most affected counties (eligible for FEMA assistance) accounted for 2.7 million jobs (2.1% of U.S. total), 163,000 business establishments (1.9% of

U.S. total), and \$87 billion in wages (1.7% of U.S. total). Even when narrowing the focus to areas identified on the FEMA flood and damage assessment maps, the impact includes 373,000 jobs, 22,000 establishments, and \$3.5 billion in wages. Turning to before/after data, Parks noted that from August to September, Louisiana lost 240,000 jobs—the largest one-month state level drop ever recorded. Employment in New Orleans metro is down 209,000 compared with last year. The 5.4 percentage point increase in Louisiana’s unemployment rate (from August to September) is the largest one-month increase ever recorded for a state, and the 21-point increase in Gulfport-Biloxi is the highest recorded for any metro area. The impact is evident even at the national level, where total nonfarm employment had been growing at about 190,000 per month, but growth in September was only 17,000, and unemployment jumped from 4.9 to 5.1%. Parks described a number of special efforts by BLS, including the addition of unique questions to the Current Population Survey to track the labor force status of hurricane evacuees.

Margot Anderson (EIA) stated that EIA prepares data to support decisions related to the energy industry, and noted that Katrina and Rita were the most serious disasters to ever hit the industry. In the post-hurricane period, EIA monitored the dramatic changes in energy supply and prices. It also put together short-term forecasts of energy demand, and for the first time, has provided these for alternative scenarios, reflecting assumptions of fast, medium, or slow recovery. It has since refined these forecasts as actual recovery has proved to be slow, following some initial rebound. EIA does not expect a full recovery until March/April 2006, but Anderson noted the great resiliency of the energy industry. She also observed that EIA did not perform any special data collection, but looking back, commented that they could have used more information about on-shore natural gas.

Philip Ross (EPA) observed that while EPA is a regulatory (not a statistical) agency, it collects large amounts of data. To those surveying human subjects, EPA’s collection of data from the environment may seem straightforward, but Ross pointed to the challenges they face in interpretation. For example, environmental data from New Orleans will have to

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COPAFS: Federal Agencies

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be interpreted to decide when areas can be repopulated, and these interpretations will be made in a highly political context. In addition, data collection itself has been a challenge in the hurricane impact areas. The storms destroyed many electromechanical data collection devices, and EPA is working with local officials to determine areas where data collection has become most important. EPA will confront another challenge in monitoring the environmental impacts when the demolition of large areas of housing begins.

Edith McArthur (NCES) reported that 168 post-secondary institutions were potentially affected (in the impact areas), but that probably only 50–60 actually were affected. She said NCES hopes to conduct separate surveys of these institutions, and noted that they already have a longitudinal survey of students in the field that has identified many affected by the hurricanes. She presented maps of the impacted areas showing the location of schools, noting that most surveys are mail questionnaires sent to schools, and thus are influenced by the status of mail delivery. For those surveys involving interviews with students, she noted the need for sensitivity to what the respondents in the impact areas have been through.

Marcie Cynamon (NCHS) described the three NCHS surveys—the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), the National Immunization Survey (NIS), and the State and Local Areas Integrated Telephone Survey (SLAITS)—and how they are affected by the hurricanes. For example, because some NHIS primary sampling units are in the hurricane area, and because displaced persons in households are not probed, it believes it has lost large numbers of interviews. The NIS telephone survey of households with children 19–35 months (to monitor vaccination coverage) has also been disrupted. Interviewing has been restored in many areas, but not yet in New Orleans. SLAITS uses the NIS sampling frame, and is now collecting two-year information on children with special healthcare needs, which will provide a basis for tracking hurricane impacts. For example, questions are being added this year to identify the healthcare effects on displaced persons.

James Weed (State of Louisiana) described disruption to the Louisiana's vital statistics system in which data are collected locally, sent to the states, and then on to NCHS. Among the ongoing issues, the

Louisiana vital statistics office was in a New Orleans building that is no longer accessible. The office was initially moved to Baton Rouge, and later to Metairie, Louisiana. The electronic birth registration system is not functioning, and no electronic data have been received since Katrina. Many local employees involved in the vital statistics program are either gone or retired, and Weed described the lack of nosologists (those who code the cause of death) as a particular problem. Then there is the impact on the vital statistics themselves. For example, Texas and Mississippi are now reporting large numbers of births to Louisiana residents who have relocated to these states. The impacts on the data for the New Orleans area remain to be seen, but Weed expects they will be severe.

Ron Jarmin (Census) stressed that damage from the hurricanes was highly localized, and described Census Bureau efforts to assess the impacts (on business establishments and employees) with greater precision than that achieved with the often-cited state and county level data. He described the GIS overlay of small area census geography on the FEMA flood and damage assessment maps, enabling the classification of census blocks by type of impact. The next step was to geocode business addresses to blocks to identify the number and characteristics of businesses in impacted areas. Because it is more geographically precise, this approach provides a more accurate picture, and therefore lower estimates of damage. However, the inability to geocode many business addresses to small area census geography is an issue, and further reduces the resulting estimates.

In addition to the agency representatives, **Denice Warren**, Information Systems Designer with the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center, made a special lunchtime presentation. She described her personal experience as a New Orleans resident now living in Phoenix, and her work with the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center (GNOCDC) during the post-hurricane period.

Warren took just a moment to describe how homesick she is, but then got right to the business of describing the GNOCDC, and giving attendees a tour of the web site www.gnocdc.org (in slide form). The center does not collect data, but rather hand-picks data from existing sources to support a variety of applications. Pre-hurricane applications included

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mapping of New Orleans neighborhoods, analyses of income disparity, and grant applications. Before Katrina, the web site received about 5,000 hits per month, but the numbers swelled to 40,000 in September 2005 and 80,000 in October. The media were heavy users of the site, and Warren expressed satisfaction with her group's ability to focus some of the coverage at the neighborhood level, rather than simply greater New Orleans.

Even as Warren and her colleagues had their lives disrupted (they are now scattered across the nation), they not only kept their operation going, but responded to the huge spike in inquiries and requests, ranging from informational (the elevation of New Orleans schools or data on historic housing) to pleas for help from evacuees concerned about the fate of loved ones who had not evacuated. Warren explained that Katrina has forced them to broaden their focus to include FEMA, environmental, and other data sources, which would have seemed

“exotic” before the storm. Among the tables and maps Warren presented, one of the more striking was a map showing how much of New Orleans' housing is still uninhabitable.

Beyond the data and maps, and between the lines of her remarks, Warren's story illustrates how sought after basic data become in a time of disaster, and that data providers can be among those delivering critical services under difficult circumstances. When one attendee suggested that Warren should give her presentation on Capitol Hill, Andrew Reamer of Brookings Institution (where Warren presented in October) commented that she has presented to selected members, and played an important role in the recent education effort on behalf of the Census Bureau budget. ▲

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AUBER Representative to COPAFS

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