

submitting and reading comments are detailed on the site.

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Karen.W.Guagliardo@usda.gov.

Read Applications and Comments: All applications and comments will be available for public inspection at the office above during regular business hours (7 CFR 1.27(c)).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Karen W. Guagliardo, 202-720-8262 or *Karen.W.Guagliardo@usda.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 7(f)(1) of the United States Grain Standards Act (USGSA) (7 U.S.C. 71-87k) authorizes GIPSA's Administrator to designate a qualified applicant to provide official services in a specified area after determining that the applicant is better able than any other applicant to provide such official services. Under section 7(g)(1) of the USGSA, designations of official agencies are effective for 3 years unless terminated by the Secretary, but may be renewed according to the criteria and procedures prescribed in section 7(f) of the Act.

Areas Open for Designation

Columbus

Pursuant to Section 7(f)(2) of the Act, the following geographic areas, in the States of Michigan and Ohio are assigned to this official agency:

In Michigan:

Jackson (east of U.S. Route 127 and south and west of State Road 50), Lenawee (east Bounded on the West by State Route 127 at the Michigan-Ohio State line north to State Route 50; Bounded on the north by State Route 50 at State Route 127 east to the Michigan State line; the Michigan state line south to the Michigan-Ohio State line.

In Ohio:

The northern Ohio State line east to the Ohio Pennsylvania State line; Bounded on the East by the Ohio-Pennsylvania State line south to the Ohio River; Bounded on the South by the Ohio River south-southwest to the western Scioto County line; and Bounded on the West by the western Scioto County line north to State Route 73; State Route 73 northwest to U.S. Route 22; U.S. Route 22 west to U.S. Route 68; U.S. Route 68 north to Clark County; the northern Clark County

line west to State Route 560; State Route 560 north to State Route 296; State Route 296 west to Interstate 75; Interstate 75 north to State Route 47; State Route 47 northeast to U.S. Route 68 (including all of Sidney, Ohio); U.S. Route 68 north to the southern Hancock County line; the southern Hancock County line west to the western Hancock, Wood and Lucas County lines north to the Michigan-Ohio State line; the Michigan-Ohio State line west to State Route 127.

Columbus' assigned geographic area does not include those export port locations within their assigned geographic areas, which are serviced by GIPSA.

Gulf Country

Pursuant to Section 7(f)(2) of the Act, the following geographic areas, in the State of Texas are assigned to this official agency:

Bounded on the North by the northern Young, Jack, Montague, Cooke, Grayson, Fannin, Lamar, Red River, Morris, and Marion County lines east to the Texas State line; Bounded on the East by the eastern Texas State line south to the southern Shelby County line; Bounded on the South by the southern Shelby, Rusk, Smith, Henderson, Navarro, Hill, Bosque, Hamilton, and Mills County lines west to the western Mills county line; and Bounded on the West by the western Mills, Comanche, Eastland, Stephens, and Young County lines north to the northern Young County line.

Northeast Indiana

Pursuant to Section 7(f)(2) of the Act, the following geographic areas, in the State of Indiana are assigned to this official agency:

Bounded on the North by the northern Lagrange and Steuben County lines; Bounded on the East by the eastern Steuben, De Kalb, Allen, and Adams County lines; Bounded on the South by the southern Adams and Wells County lines; and Bounded on the West by the western Wells County line; the southern Huntington and Wabash County lines; the western Wabash County line north to State Route 114; State Route 114 northwest to State Route 19; State Route 19 north to Kosciusko County; the western and northern Kosciusko County lines; the western Noble and Lagrange County lines.

The following grain elevator, located outside of the above contiguous geographic area, is part of this geographic area assignment: E.M.P. Coop, Payne, Paulding County, Ohio (located inside Michigan Grain Inspection Services, Inc.'s, area).

Opportunity for Designation

Interested persons or governmental agencies may apply for designation to provide official services in the geographic areas specified above under the provisions of section 7(f) of the USGSA and 7 CFR 800.196(d).

Designation in the specified geographic areas is for the period beginning January 1, 2011, and ending December 31, 2013. To apply for designation or for more information, contact Karen W. Guagliardo at the address listed above or visit GIPSA's Web site at <http://www.gipsa.usda.gov>.

Request for Comments

We are publishing this notice to provide interested persons the opportunity to comment on the quality of services provided by the Columbus, Gulf Country, and Northeast Indiana official agencies. In the designation process, we are particularly interested in receiving comments citing reasons and pertinent data supporting or objecting to the designation of the applicants. Submit all comments to Karen W. Guagliardo at the above address or at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

We consider applications, comments, and other available information when determining which applicant will be designated.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 71-87k.

Marianne Plaus,

Acting Administrator, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration.

[FR Doc. 2010-12381 Filed 5-24-10; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

Solicitation of Nominations for Members of the USDA Grain Inspection Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, USDA.

ACTION: Notice reopening time period for soliciting nominees to the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee.

SUMMARY: The Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) is reopening the time period for submitting nominations for individuals to serve on the USDA Grain Inspection Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) to invite additional nominations. USDA values diversity. In an effort to obtain nominations of diverse candidates, USDA encourages the nominations of men and women of all racial and ethnic groups. The Advisory Committee meets twice annually to advise GIPSA on the programs and services it delivers under the U.S. Grain Standards Act (USGSA). Recommendations by the Advisory

Committee help GIPSA better meet the needs of its customers who operate in a dynamic and changing marketplace.

DATES: GIPSA will consider nominations received by June 24, 2010.

ADDRESSES: Submit nominations for the Advisory Committee by completing form AD-755. Nominations may be submitted by:

- *E-Mail:* Terri.L.Henry@usda.gov.
- *Mail:* Terri Henry, GIPSA, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Room 1633-S, Stop 3642, Washington, DC 20250-3642.
- *Fax:* (202) 690-2173.
- *Hand Delivery or Courier:* Terri Henry, GIPSA, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Room 1633-S, Stop 3642, Washington, DC 20250-3642.
- *Internet:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Terri L. Henry, telephone (202) 205-8281 or e-mail Terri.L.Henry@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: As required by section 21 of the USGSA (7 U.S.C. 87j), as amended, the Secretary of Agriculture established the Grain Inspection Advisory Committee to provide advice to the GIPSA Administrator on implementation of the USGSA. The current authority for the Advisory Committee expires on September 30, 2015. As specified in the USGSA, each member's term is 3 years and no member may serve successive terms.

The Advisory Committee consists of 15 members, appointed by the Secretary, who represent the interests of grain producers, processors, handlers, merchandisers, consumers, exporters, and scientists with expertise in research related to the policies in section 2 of the USGSA (7 U.S.C. 74). Members of the Advisory Committee serve without compensation. USDA may reimburse members for travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, for travel away from their homes or regular places of business in performance of Advisory Committee service (see 5 U.S.C. 5703).

A list of current Advisory Committee members and other relevant information are available on the GIPSA Web site at <http://www.gipsa.usda.gov>. Under the section "I Want To * * *" select "Learn about the Advisory Committee."

On November 10, 2009, GIPSA published a notice in the **Federal Register** (74 FR 57991) soliciting nominations to serve on the Advisory Committee to replace five members and eight alternate members whose terms

expired in March 2010. GIPSA is reopening for 30 days the time period for submitting additional nominations for individuals to serve on the Advisory Committee.

Persons interested in serving on the Advisory Committee or nominating another individual to serve, may contact: Terri L. Henry by telephone at 202-205-8281, by fax at 202-690-2173, or by electronic mail at Terri.L.Henry@usda.gov to request Form AD-755. Form AD-755 may also be obtained via GIPSA's Web site at <http://www.gipsa.usda.gov>. Under the section "I Want To..." select "Learn about the Advisory Committee," then select Form AD-755. To ensure that recommendations of the Advisory Committee take into account the needs of the diverse groups served by the USDA, nominations shall include, to the extent practicable, individuals with demonstrated ability and experience to represent the interests of racial and ethnic minorities, women, and persons with disabilities.

The final selection of Advisory Committee members and alternates is made by the Secretary of Agriculture without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, mental or physical disability, marital status, familial status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or because all or part of their income is derived from public assistance.

Marianne Plaus,

Acting Administrator, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration.

[FR Doc. 2010-12380 Filed 5-24-10; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Patent and Trademark Office

[Docket No.: PTO-2010-0031]

Notice Regarding the Elimination of the Fee for Petitions To Make Special Filed Under the Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) Programs

AGENCY: United States Patent and Trademark Office, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) is eliminating the fee for the petition to make special under the Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) programs. Currently, applicants must pay a petition fee under 37 CFR 1.17(h) to have an application to enter into the PPH program. With the elimination of the fee, applicants will no longer have

to pay the petition to make special fee in order to request an application enter all current pilot and fully implemented PPH programs. The elimination of the petition fee will simplify the PPH requirements and is expected to encourage greater PPH participation.

Since 2006, the USPTO has implemented the Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) programs with a number of patent offices as part of efforts to pursue work sharing to avoid duplication of work among patent offices, and for reducing its own pendency and backlog. Notices regarding the PPH programs are available on the USPTO Web site at: http://www.uspto.gov/patents/init_events/pph/index.jsp. Until now, the PPH notices have indicated that a request for participation in the PPH program must be accompanied by a petition to make special under 37 CFR 1.102(d) along with the required petition fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(h).

The PPH applications have proven, on average, to take significantly less time to prosecute than non-PPH applications. Using the PPH process also increases the sharing and re-use of information (primarily search and examination results) between the USPTO and its partner patent offices. Improving the PPH framework to make it more user-friendly, and thereby encourage greater participation by applicants, would support the Office's goal to optimize both the quality and timeliness of patents. Therefore, the USPTO has determined that all PPH applications will now be advanced out of turn for examination under 37 CFR 1.102(a) in order to expedite the business of the Office. Applications that are advanced out of turn under 37 CFR 1.102(a) do not require the petition fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(h). Previously, applications were advanced out of turn under 37 CFR 1.102(d).

DATES: *Effective Date:* May 25, 2010.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Magdalen Greenlief, Office of the Associate Commissioner for Patent Examination Policy, by telephone at 571-272-8140, by facsimile transmission to 571-273-8140, or by mail addressed to: Mail Stop Comments-Patents, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: PPH is a first concrete implementation of a work-sharing framework which was jointly developed by the USPTO and the Japan Patent Office (JPO) in 2006 as a pilot project. The objective of the PPH is to promote work sharing while at the same time allowing applicants to obtain