

V.P. VOICE: FCS ■ BY DON BUSINGER

## FCS Working Conditions “Worsening”

As FCS lurches toward the close of the 2008 bid and assignment cycle and the level of nail-biting rises, your AFSA VP and representative briefed FCS management on highlights of our most recent member survey:

Asked “How would you judge current U.S. Commercial Service morale?” only 2 percent of respondents thought it was excellent. A majority — 57 percent — thought it was fair or poor. The survey results show that many factors weigh on morale, including:

- Lack of comparability or locality pay for FS-1s and below overseas;
- An assignment process that was highly delayed this time and had very questionable features appearing to flout long-established rules (the subject of an institutional grievance filed by AFSA in December 2007);
- Lack of adequate resources (personnel and budget) to do our jobs, even as we see bigger Foreign Service agencies like State and USAID request Fiscal Year 2009 increases of between 15 and 30 percent, while commercial diplomacy and export promotion get short shrift; and
- In some cases, less than excellent support and service in headquarters from the offices we depend on (such as OFSHR, CDAS and OPD) for personnel operations, assignments, consultations and training.

In fact, a full two-thirds — 67 percent — of the 120 FCS

officers who participated in the survey believe that overall conditions of work for the Foreign Service are worsening, judging from responses to the following question: At the present time, do you believe that the overall conditions of work for the professional Foreign Service are improving, worsening, or remaining the same?

|                    | Number of Responses | Percentage of Respondents |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Improving          | 10                  | 8                         |
| Worsening          | 80                  | 67                        |
| Remaining the same | 30                  | 25                        |
| Total              | 120                 | 100                       |

The jury is still out on domestic assignments, the seven-year rule, the 15-year rule and other pending issues, as we have discussed in previous columns and AFSAnets. Discussions with management on our spring 2006 midterm proposal drag on with little concrete progress to report and continued divisions within management on these issues.

Both Stephen Anderson and I are moving on in a few months, both of us to “Old Europe” — he to Dublin and I to Switzerland.

We’ll keep you posted on progress finding successors out there for back here in D.C. □



BPA WORLDWIDE  
COMPLETES FSJ AUDIT

## Journal Circulation Tops 15,000

BY ED MILTENBERGER,  
CIRCULATION MANAGER

The *Foreign Service Journal* was recently audited for membership by BPA Worldwide, a firm whose media audits track circulation based on business/distribution, demographics and geographic coverage for some 2,500 media outlets.

BPA determined that the total number of subscribers to the *Journal* is 15,106. Sixty percent of them are active-duty employees of the five U.S. foreign affairs agencies, both generalists and specialists. The remaining

subscribers are Foreign Service retirees, Civil Service employees and members of the public, libraries, universities and other institutions, as well as members of Congress and senior foreign affairs officials.

“I am delighted to see the *Foreign Service Journal* cross the 15,000-circulation mark for the first time,” says AFSA President John Naland, “and to do so with certification by the prestigious BPA Worldwide circulation auditing firm. This independent verification of the higher circulation level will help the *Journal* attract more advertisers, providing readers with more information on goods and services of particular interest to them. It will also increase the revenues that help finance publication of the *Journal*.”

In addition, the audit report will be listed in Standard Rate and Data Service. SRDS connects buyers and sellers of media by offering comprehensive coverage

of traditional media as well as today’s alternative marketing opportunities.

“We are pleased that the *Foreign Service Journal* has successfully completed the circulation audit and is now a member of BPA Worldwide,” says BPA Worldwide’s president and CEO, Glenn Hanson. “We applaud the association for providing current and prospective advertisers with the solid assurance of an independent circulation audit conducted according to our world-respected, uncompromising standards. With a BPA audit, media buyers can be confident that circulation claims are accurate, and that they have the verified data that they need to assess a publication’s effectiveness in serving its market.”

“Our firm commitment to our members, readers and advertisers, reflected in the *FSJ*’s strong growth, will be enhanced by our membership in BPA,” says AFSA Executive Director John Mamone. □