

document composed of 8 inquiry components allowing users to submit suggestions for changes to the thesaurus. Information to be submitted includes, user contact information (name, affiliation, email, phone), the proposed changes to the thesaurus, the field of study or subject area of the term being proposed, justification for the change, and any reference material which the user would like to provide as background information. Name, email and phone components are mandatory.

**Estimate of Burden:** Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 minutes per response.

**Respondents:** The agricultural community, USDA personnel and their cooperators, and including public and private users or providers of agricultural information.

**Estimated Number of Respondents:** 250 per year.

**Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents:** 2500 minutes.

**Comments:** Comments are invited on (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and the assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who respond, including the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technology. Comments should be sent to the address in the preamble. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Dated: November 27, 2002.

**Caird E. Rexroad, Jr.,**

*Acting Associate Administrator.*

[FR Doc. 02-32309 Filed 12-23-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-03-P

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Food and Nutrition Service

#### Report on Electronic Benefits Transfer Systems

**AGENCY:** Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of request for public comment.

**SUMMARY:** The Food and Nutrition Service, Benefit Redemption Division, would like to obtain public comments on specific topics related to initiatives and advances in electronic benefit delivery for the issuance of food stamp benefits. The purpose of obtaining public input on electronic benefits transfer (EBT) systems is to offer State agencies, advocacy groups, food retailers, EBT-system vendors, and other interested parties the opportunity to provide input on EBT issues and initiatives prior to the submission of a report on EBT systems to Congress.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before February 24, 2003 to be assured of consideration.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments should be submitted to Lizbeth Silbermann, Chief, Electronic Benefit Transfer Branch, Benefit Redemption Division, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia 22302. Comments may also be datafaxed to the attention of Ms. Silbermann at (703) 305-1863, or by e-mail to [lizbeth.silbermann@fns.usda.gov](mailto:lizbeth.silbermann@fns.usda.gov). All comments will be open for public inspection at the office of the Food and Nutrition Service during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday) at 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, Virginia, Room 403.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-171, requires the Secretary of Agriculture to submit a report on EBT systems to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate by October 1, 2003. In an effort to supplement the information that will be provided to Congress with the views of all parties involved with EBT, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is seeking public input through this notice on two general areas of EBT: (1) food stamp EBT initiatives being developed or considered by interested parties, and (2) potential advances in electronic benefit delivery in the next 5 to 10 years, particularly with respect to farmers' markets, fraud identification, and fostering of increased competition among EBT-system vendors.

#### EBT Initiatives

FNS is seeking information and comments on initiatives and advancements being developed, considered or taken by State agencies, food retailers, EBT-system vendors, client advocates, and other interested parties to address any outstanding issues with respect to EBT systems. Of

particular interest are potential advances in electronic benefit delivery in the next 5 to 10 years with respect to the following areas:

1. **Farmers' markets**—Because farmers' markets and produce stands do not have ready access to phone lines and electricity, the infrastructure for EBT does not exist. Although all farmers have the option to use manual vouchers, it is not the ideal solution because the process is not conducive to the way business is handled at these markets. FNS has been exploring alternatives to manual vouchers to improve operations for these vendors. One option is a scrip system; food stamp clients would use their EBT cards at a central Point of Sale (POS) location in exchange for scrip and then exchange the scrip with individual vendors at the market for food. The second alternative utilizes wireless equipment to authorize food stamp purchases in a market setting. Several States have operated scrip and/or wireless pilots that have been tested. FNS is interested in receiving comments on the pilots and other possible improvements to the way farmers and farmers' markets participate in EBT.

2. **Fraud identification**—FNS' Anti-fraud Locator of EBT Retailer Transactions (ALERT) Subsystem. ALERT utilizes a file of retailer EBT transactions provided by the States' contracted EBT processors to identify suspicious transaction activity. It assesses and analyzes over 67 million, individual EBT transactions per month. ALERT makes available, on line, a series of reports and queries, as well as the actual transaction data, to assigned Departmental and Agency staff with retailer and compliance monitoring responsibilities. This data triggers further analysis and investigations, which may result in on-site reports, investigations, prosecutions and administrative sanctions. It also enables investigators to track the stores at which a given recipient redeems benefits. Transactions and locations can be further analyzed in terms of overall shopping patterns in all stores. This information is then used to better target investigations or to act on program violators through administrative sanction procedures. FNS is interested in gathering input on possible advances in the increased use of transaction data from EBT systems to identify and prosecute fraud.

3. **Fostering increased competition**—Due to concern over pricing increases, FNS commissioned a report, the "Electronic Benefits Transfer Alternatives Analysis," to explore ways to increase competition in the EBT marketplace and keep EBT costs

affordable for all State agencies. The report highlights various procurement and pricing strategies as a way to leverage pricing and obtain economies of scale. FNS is interested in obtaining comments on these and other strategies to further foster increased competition among EBT-system vendors that would ensure cost containment and optimal service.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Lizbeth Silbermann, Chief, EBT Branch, Benefit Redemption Division, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 403, Alexandria, Virginia 22302, telephone (703) 305-2517.

Dated: December 13, 2002.

**Eric M. Bost,**

*Under Secretary, Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services.*

[FR Doc. 02-32434 Filed 12-23-02; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410-30-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**Forest Service**

**Notice of Resource Advisory Committee Meeting**

**AGENCY:** North Central Idaho Resource Advisory Committee, Grangeville, Idaho, USDA, Forest Service.

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to the authorities in the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463) and under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Pub. L. 106-393) the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests' North Central Idaho Resource Advisory Committee will meet Wednesday, January 22, 2003 in Grangeville, Idaho for a business meeting. The meeting is open to the public.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The business meeting on January 22 begins at 10 AM, at the Super 8 Motel, 801 W.

South 1st Street, Grangeville, Idaho. Agenda topics will include discussion of potential projects. A public forum will begin at 2:30 PM (PST).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ihor Mereszczak, Staff Officer and Designated Federal Officer, at (208) 983-1950.

Dated: December 16, 2002.

**Ihor Mereszczak,**

*Acting Forest Supervisor.*

[FR Doc. 02-32324 Filed 12-23-02; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3410-11-M**

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**Rural Utilities Service**

**Weather Radio Transmitter Grant Program**

**AGENCY:** Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** On April 4, 2001, the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) published a Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) in the **Federal Register** (66 FR 17857, April 4, 2001) announcing a new grant program, and the availability of grant funds under this program, to finance the installation of new transmitters to extend the coverage of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Weather Radio system (NOAA Weather Radio) in rural America. Included in the NOFA was a list of proposed NOAA Weather Radio transmitter sites that would be eligible for funding. On October 16, 2001, RUS published an updated listing of the proposed NOAA Weather Radio transmitter sites that would be eligible for funding (66 FR 52571).

The purpose of this notice is to provide an additional updated listing of the proposed NOAA Weather Radio transmitter sites. An applicant for a grant under this program may apply for a site included in this updated listing, in the listing published October 16, 2001, or in the original listing published

April 4, 2001. RUS continues to emphasize that it strongly encourages all grant applicants to consult and coordinate with the National Weather Service prior to submitting a completed application.

Further details on the application process and eligibility are available in the NOFA in the April 4, 2001, **Federal Register** (66 FR 17857) or on the RUS Web site at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/initiatives/weatherradio.htm>.

Applications for grants will be accepted until grants totaling \$5 million in appropriations have been made. A list of the approved grant applications is available on the RUS Web site at <http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/initiatives/weatherradio.htm>. RUS will update this list as the agency approves additional grants.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Roberta D. Purcell, Assistant Administrator, Telecommunications Program, Rural Utilities Service, STOP 1590, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-1590, Telephone (202) 720-9554, Facsimile (202) 720-0810.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Updated List**

An area's need for a new NOAA Weather Radio transmitter is determined by its inherent risk of hazardous weather and the absence of adequate coverage by an existing transmitter. RUS, in consultation with the National Weather Service, has developed the attached updated list of proposed transmitter sites that will be eligible for funding under the NOFA published in the April 4, 2001, **Federal Register**.

RUS will continue to update its list from time to time and will publish updates in the **Federal Register**.

Dated: December 13, 2002.

**Curtis M. Anderson,**

*Deputy Administrator, Acting as Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.*

**NWS SITE LISTINGS**

State and site name	County name	FIPS	Latitude	Longitude
Alabama:				
Cullman .....	Cullman .....	01043	34-10-17 N	86-50-39 W
Hytop .....	Jackson .....	01071	34-54-58 N	86-05-17 W
Arab/Guntersville .....	Marshall .....	01095	34-24-04.1 N	86-26-27 W
California:				
Catalina Island (Marine)/Avalon .....	Los Angeles .....	06037	33-20-34 N	118-19-36 W
Conway Summit/Bridgeport .....	Mono .....	06051	38-15-21 N	119-13-49 W