**Van Zeck**

**Commissioner**

**U.S. Department of the Treasury**

**Bureau of the Public Debt**

**Narrative description of strong commitment to effective continuity of government through successful development of managers and executives:**

Mr. Zeck’s commitment to the development of employees at all levels, including managers and executives, has always been a top priority.

Mr. Zeck launched and promoted an executive coaching program involving the use of contracted coaches who work closely with each executive in Public Debt to identify their strengths and areas for improvement. This one-on-one developmental opportunity allows executives to leverage their strengths and weaknesses to create a more effective organization. In fact, Mr. Zeck uses the experience he has gained through his own one-on-one coaching to strengthen the relationships he has, not only with his subordinates, but also with his peers. He regularly reaches out to his managers and executives and meets with them individually to provide his assistance and support.

As a proponent of coaching, Mr. Zeck introduced a bureau-wide coaching program at Public Debt. The program is offered as a benefit for all employees, including managers. The program helps employees enhance their ability to create an environment that fosters respect for everyone. The program encourages and challenges employees to find within themselves the ability to make more conscious choices in their lives so they create healthy working relationships and become more effective and fulfilled employees. Mr. Zeck’s support of a coaching culture at Public Debt has helped to create a more open and collaborative work environment that strengthens relationships, supports values, and serves as a reminder of the importance of Public Debt’s mission.

To support and facilitate development of managers and executives, Mr. Zeck also actively encourages rotational assignments that help to broaden the experience of his management team by allowing them to gain operating knowledge of other areas in Public Debt. Employees have the opportunity to not only gain valuable knowledge and experience but also to network with others in order to benefit themselves as well as the organization. These detail opportunities have proved very popular and beneficial. In fact, over the last several years, numerous employees have taken advantage of the opportunity to learn about other program area operations through detail assignments.

Mr. Zeck’s commitment to new managers and executives is strong. He meets personally for half a day with all new grade 14s, 15s, and Senior Executive employees. During these meetings he gets to know the manager, provides information on the Bureau’s values-based culture, shares his expectations, and offers his support.

Mr. Zeck requires all new managers and supervisors to attend the Supervisory Excellence Program (SEP). This mandatory training is provided within 18 months of an employee’s placement into a supervisory position. This classroom training includes administrative modules consisting of Public Debt’s policies, procedures and guidance on a variety of supervisory issues as well as fundamental leadership training. Mr. Zeck also created a Lead Development program for employees promoted from technical to lead positions. This program offers leads the tools and skills necessary to prepare them for the leadership responsibilities and challenges that come with a lead position. The result of these incomparable training opportunities is improved leadership effectiveness throughout Public Debt.

In April 2007, Mr. Zeck made a commitment to ensure a values-based culture exists at Public Debt by establishing a Values Advocate position. This position was created to enhance the Bureau’s values vision and to develop a Framework for Values. The Framework, a dynamic support system comprised of a variety of reading, training, coaching, communication, and assessment opportunities, was designed to assist Public Debt employees in meeting values-related expectations.

Under Mr. Zeck’s leadership, all employees are offered the opportunity to participate in a two-day values-based program called Leadership and Self-Deception. This training course enables employees to learn about self-deception and the role it plays in organizational problems. These seminars are facilitated by Mr. Zeck and other Public Debt executives and provide everyone with the opportunity to discuss Public Debt’s values, exchange ideas, focus on how values impact organizational goals, and discuss how every employee can make a difference at Public Debt. This training opportunity has resonated with staff. To date, approximately 80 percent of Public Debt’s overall population of nearly 2,000 have participated in this training.

Due to the retirement eligibility of a large number of executives, Mr. Zeck recently implemented a Senior Executive Service (SES) Candidate Development Program (CDP) as part the Bureau’s succession planning efforts. The program required coordination with Treasury and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and yielded a cadre of well-trained, highly qualified employees ready to assume a career in the Senior Executive ranks. Of the eleven candidates originally selected, three are currently in SES positions and the remaining eight are certified for non-competitive placement into a SES position. Mr. Zeck’s efforts in this area have ensured business continuity at the executive level for many years to come.

Employee satisfaction at Public Debt is extraordinary. Employees have been and continue to be very satisfied with the Bureau’s leadership, work environment, rewards and recognition, and professional development. In 2011, the Partnership for Public Service ranked Public Debt as one of the top ten “Best Places to Work” in the federal government for the third consecutive year. These rankings were based on results from the Office of Personnel Management’s Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey and are considered the most comprehensive and authoritative rating of employee engagement in the federal government. These rankings result from consistent, long-term effective executive-level attention provided by Mr. Zeck and his team, and spans the entire spectrum of leadership responsibilities including strategic planning, financial management, delegation, communication, cultivation of organizational culture, expectations of accountability, employee development, labor-management relations, and use of technology.

Mr. Zeck views feedback as a valuable tool for improving individual, and ultimately, organization performance. Mr. Zeck and his fellow executives recently participated in OPM’s Leadership 360 Assessment. The assessment provided each executive the opportunity to become more effective through a better understanding of how others (supervisors, peers, and employees) perceive them. Realizing this valuable feedback tool was equally important at lower levels within the organization, Mr. Zeck decided to make the assessment available at the managerial level. This resulted in 50 managers having the opportunity to participate in a 360-degree assessment. Managers who participated received an individual coaching session and were encouraged to develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP) based on their 360 results.

Through employee surveys and focus groups, Mr. Zeck recognizes that the front-line supervisor is a key to morale and employee satisfaction. His strong support of an executive led, voluntary forum for supervisors to learn and share best practices and generate cross-organization relationships, resulted in SWAT—Supervisors Working Actively Together. The group provides updates on policies, procedures, employee development initiatives and current leadership methods while providing attendees the opportunity to work and learn from other supervisors around Public Debt.

Mr. Zeck’s leadership style has long been revered by his peers and staff—it is one of encouragement, concern for others, and utmost integrity at all levels of the organization.

His belief in setting and achieving high standards not only for himself, but his staff as well, will most assuredly promote the continuity of government operations at Public Debt for future decades.