

# PHROGS: Peers Honoring and Recognizing Others for Great Stuff!



## Description

PHROGS is an employee recognition program for the Department of Labor in which employees can nominate each other for doing great stuff. Whether they want their co-workers to be recognized for being a great team player, for an outstanding job on a recent project, or just a great overall attitude, this is their chance to say so.

## Logistics

PHROGS nominations can be sent to the public information officer every quarter. At the end of each quarter, a committee will go through all nominations and pick a winner. The winner will be featured in the monthly department newsletter, the Labor Letter, complete with the nomination letter itself, photos, and an article featuring their biography and service history with the department. The winner also gets a personal letter from the Secretary, thanking them for their work and congratulating them on their award. At the end of the year, all winners will be invited to Pierre for a special dinner with the Secretary.

### What's in it for me?

The PHROGS winner will also receive a prize package, which will be sent at an undisclosed time. The package comes shipped in a 3 by 3 foot box directly to the employee, which creates a bit of a mystery. When opened, a huge bouquet of green balloons, along with one large frog balloon will pop out. The winner also receives a PHROGS certificate. Again, this is no ordinary certificate; it is a 2 by 3 foot sign, printed by DOT. To top things off, the winner gets a leather portfolio with the DOL logo imprinted on it.



### Kick-off

PHROGS was introduced at statewide employee meetings. The public information officer shared this information with an interesting twist. Employees were surprised to hear an actual “frog croak” coming from the back of the room every time the word “phrogs” was said. Soon after, the “phrogs mascot”, complete with costume, joined in by hopping around the room every time the word “phrogs” was said. A frog hand puppet was also used in the presentation, mimicking the speaker. In addition, bendable frogs were placed at each place setting for the employees to take back to their offices to remind them of the program.



## 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Winner Nomination Letter

Joe Kokales

Aberdeen Mail Room

I nominate Joe because he is a valuable employee who often gets over-looked or taken for granted because most of his work is behind the scenes. He is always extremely helpful, courteous, and efficient in any job asked of him. He fully listens to understand what is needed, which enables him to create an optimal product.

Joe's role is an essential and integral part of the Department of Labor because printed materials are relied upon daily by not only staff, but the public as well. Forms, letterhead, and envelopes are used internally by *every* division *every* day. It would be impossible for any one to perform their job without these necessary tools and resources. The message of the Department and information on all programs and services are provided to the public through print materials such as brochures, posters, rack cards, fliers, and more. Without the assistance of Joe and the Mail Room staff, it would be difficult to demonstrate why we really are "the workforce experts." This is a priority of the entire Department, and Joe constantly contributes to this goal.

Joe's position is unique because he does not work directly with only one division, but rather all six of them. This requires great attention to detail in making sure staff receive what they need when they need it. It also requires Joe to stay informed on what materials are current, and what materials are outdated. Joe is always tolerable of changes and works diligently to implement new ideas and concepts. Most people do not like change and refuse to change their ways, but Joe accepts this and explains to others what is required of them and why.

Joe is overall an excellent team member who constantly strives to perform his job effectively.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Winner Article

Joe is a dedicated employee who has been with the Department of Labor for 20 years. He currently is the Central Duplicating Manager in Aberdeen, but also has served in the position of Press Operator. Over the years, Joe has mastered the many skills required to effectively fulfill his job duties.

A typical day for Joe starts with checking to see what jobs have been requested. He then must prioritize those jobs according to their urgency and assigns them to his staff accordingly. Joe also works on the job requests, but as the day progresses, he must tend to incoming phone calls, emails and in-house requests.

There are many steps and a variety of tasks involved in completing requests. These include ordering materials to complete the requests, shooting negatives and performing layout work, burning plates, running the printing presses, cutting paper, collating materials, folding items, bursting forms, inserting UI checks into other mailings, punching books, running the copier, managing the mail and filling supply requisitions. As one can see, the mail room operations can be quite complex. A lot of detail is involved to produce one finished product.

Joe says the favorite part of his job is to see a happy and satisfied person when a job or task has been completed. And of course eating Gayle Miller's brownies. When asked what advice he would give fellow DOL employees, he reminded us, "People can alter their lives by altering their attitudes."

Upon being the first person selected to receive the PHROGS award, Joe's initial reaction was simply, "Wow!". He is quite modest and humble though, saying, "I feel honored for the award, but also feel my staff does a great job of assisting me. I enjoy my job at the DOL and hope to continue assisting and helping everyone in the future."