

would be effective for the next full-scale wage survey in the wage area, which is scheduled to begin in February 1996. No other changes are proposed for this wage area.

**Jackson, MS:** OPM proposes to remove Adams, Claiborne, and Jefferson Counties, MS, from the Jackson survey area. In 1973, the Civil Service Commission, based on the consensus recommendation of FPRAC, added Adams, Claiborne, and Jefferson Counties to the Jackson survey area. FPRAC recommended this change to allow the inclusion in local wage surveys of counties along the Mississippi River that had experienced recent industrial growth. Regional commuting patterns and transportation facilities were also cited as factors favoring expansion of the survey area.

Based on current FWS employment patterns in the Jackson wage area and the large size of the current Jackson survey area, OPM considers it unnecessary to continue surveying Adams, Claiborne, and Jefferson Counties. Only about nine FWS employees, or less than 2 percent of the Jackson wage area total, are currently stationed in the three counties considered for removal from the survey area. The wage survey data yield from Adams, Claiborne, and Jefferson Counties has been relatively low in past surveys; only about 11 percent of the Jackson survey data during the last full-scale wage survey came from private industrial establishments located in these three counties. Also, the three counties considered for removal from the survey area are inconveniently located for survey purposes. For example, the surveyable private industrial establishments in Adams County are located approximately 185 km (115 miles) away from the city of Jackson, the main population center and the main FWS employment location in the Jackson wage area.

This change in the Jackson survey area would be effective for the next full-scale wage survey in the Jackson wage area, which is scheduled to begin in February 1997. As explained below for the Meridian, MS, wage area, OPM also proposes to remove Lamar County, MS, from the Jackson area of application and redefine the county to the Meridian survey area. No other changes are proposed for the Jackson wage area.

**Meridian, MS:** OPM proposes to remove Lamar County, MS, from the Jackson, MS, area of application and redefine the county to the Meridian FWS survey area. An analysis of the regulatory criteria for defining FWS wage areas shows that, while other regulatory criteria are indeterminate,

distance and commuting pattern criteria strongly favor definition of Lamar County to the Meridian wage area instead of the Jackson wage area. For example, an analysis of the distances between Lamar County and the Meridian and Jackson survey areas shows that Lamar County is about 179 km (111 miles) away from Jackson, but is only about 27 km (17 miles) away from Hattiesburg, MS, the closest of the two main population centers in the Meridian survey area. Also, an analysis of the commuting patterns of Lamar County's resident workforce shows that about 50 percent of Lamar County's resident workforce commutes to work in the Meridian survey area, but less than 1 percent of Lamar County's resident workforce commutes to work in the Jackson survey area.

While there are currently no FWS employees stationed in Lamar County, the addition of Lamar County to the Meridian survey area would provide a desirable increase in the number of surveyable private sector industrial establishments in the Meridian survey area—about 14 percent more than in the current Meridian survey area. Also, Lamar County is one of the two counties of the Hattiesburg, MS MSA. The other county of the Hattiesburg MSA, Forrest County, is already defined to the Meridian survey area.

This change would be effective for the next full-scale wage survey in the Meridian wage area, which is scheduled to begin in February 1997. No other changes are proposed for the Meridian wage area.

**Great Falls, MT:** The survey area of the Great Falls wage area explained in 1973 with the addition of Yellowstone County, MT, and again expanded in 1981 with the addition of Lewis and Clark County, MT. Because the Great Falls survey area currently includes both the Great Falls, MT MSA and the Billings, MT MSA, OPM proposes to rename the wage area "Montana" to better reflect the broader geographic coverage of the current survey area than is suggested by the current wage area name.

This change would be effective for the next full-scale wage survey in the wage area, which is scheduled to begin in July 1996. No other changes are proposed for this wage area.

**Pittsburgh, PA:** Based on current FWS employment patterns in the Pittsburgh wage area, OPM proposes to add Butler County, PA, to the Pittsburgh survey area. Butler County is currently defined to the Pittsburgh area of application. There are currently about 170 FWS employees—about 8 percent of the Pittsburgh wage area total—stationed in

Butler County. Butler County is currently a non-surveyed part of the Pittsburgh, PA MSA. Three of the counties of the Pittsburgh MSA (Beaver, Washington, and Westmoreland) are currently included in the Pittsburgh survey area, but far fewer FWS employees are stationed in those three counties than in Butler County.

This proposed survey area expansion would not create an undue survey burden on the lead agency for the Pittsburgh wage area (the Department of Veterans Affairs) and is strongly justified by the geographic distribution of local FWS employment. This change in the Pittsburgh survey area definition would be effective for the next full-scale wage survey in the wage area, which is scheduled to begin in August 1997.

Also, as explained above for the Hagerstown-Martinsburg-Chambersburg, MD, wage area, OPM proposes to remove Fulton County, PA, from the Pittsburgh area of application and redefine the county to the Hagerstown-Martinsburg-Chambersburg, MD, area of application. No other changes are proposed for the Pittsburgh wage area.

**Eastern Tennessee:** As explained below for the West Virginia wage area, OPM proposes to remove Norton city from the Eastern Tennessee area of application and redefine the city to the West Virginia area of application. No other changes are proposed for the Eastern Tennessee wage area.

**Corpus Christi, TX:** OPM proposes to remove Brooks, Cameron, Hidalgo, Kenedy, Starr, and Willacy Counties, TX, from the San Antonio, TX, area of application and define these six counties to the Corpus Christi area of application. An analysis of the regulatory criteria for defining FWS wage areas shows that the distance criterion favors the definition of these counties to the Corpus Christi wage area much more than to the San Antonio wage area. Also, because the most favorable routes by road from the counties go through the present Corpus Christi wage area before reaching the San Antonio survey area, transportation facilities and geographic features criteria strongly favor the Corpus Christi wage area more than the San Antonio wage area. Although all the other regulatory criteria are indeterminate, the redefinition of Brooks, Cameron, Hidalgo, Kenedy, Starr, and Willacy Counties to the Corpus Christi area of application is strongly justified by the extent to which the distance, transportation facilities, and geographic features criteria favor the Corpus Christi wage area.

The following agencies currently have FWS employees stationed in the six Texas counties proposed for redefinition