



APB ASSOCIATES, INC.

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To: APDU Members

From: Patty Becker

Re: A new beginning for APDU

As of November 1, I began a new role as Administrator for the Association of Public Data Users. It seems appropriate to provide members with some background and an idea of what to expect. I've known some of you for a long time and never met others, but this is for everyone.

About me: First, I am a charter member of APDU, having been at the founding conference in 1975. I previously served 11 years on the Board, 7 of those as Treasurer. However, I've been off the Board since 1990 and thus have not been involved in the decision-making process of the past 15 years. I've attended all but one of APDU's long series of annual conferences and made many presentations. I also served as coordinator for the APDU Working Group on Census Products, which functioned from 1999 through 2001.

Professionally, I am a demographer. I worked for the City of Detroit for 21 years (during which the City became the APDU charter member). In 1989, I set up APB Associates, a small private consulting firm, with my husband Allan (the "A" in APB). I also direct the Southeast Michigan Census Council (SEMCC), a non-profit organization which functions, in many ways, as a mini-APDU within the state of Michigan. APB Associates' clients are primarily governments and non-profit agencies.

I believe, as I've always believed, that APDU has an important role to play in the federal statistical "system." We are the primary users of data, the intermediaries who help everyone else answer their questions with numeric information. As such, we should be active in guiding decision-makers in the variety of statistical agencies to produce the best information, in the best distribution methods, that will work for users. After all, the *entire* purpose of producing data is to *use the information*.

We, the APDU membership, are in the forefront of data users in the United States. In addition, we need to make our views known, as appropriate, to the members of Congress as they deliberate over budgets and legislation in this arena.

How do we do this? By being extremely knowledgeable ourselves, and then by conveying that knowledge as appropriate to the right people in the federal government. I hope to help APDU members gain the knowledge and communicate our views. To that end:

- ★ I will write a newsletter, at first bi-monthly but perhaps with some additional issues, which conveys information I've obtained to each of you. I've been writing a similar newsletter for SEMCC for about 15 years, and distributed a sample issue to the APDU membership last spring.
- ★ I will arrange for the membership to be alerted in situations where communication is advisable, such as the recent problem with the Census budget.
- ★ I will continue to receive email and other mail from a variety of federal statistical agencies, and report important information from those sources in the newsletter, including notation of web sources.
- ★ I will be available by email and telephone to answer APDU members' questions about data sources. I know the Census Bureau best, but have a good understanding of the resources available from several other agencies.
- ★ I will manage the "business" of APDU, including the membership database, dues billing, conference registration, and a membership directory.
- ★ I will provide input to the APDU web site.

I look forward to working with all of you.