

## Chronology of SSA Events 1993-2000

### 1993

- January 20, 1993 Louis D. Enoff began his tenure as Acting Commissioner of Social Security on October 1, 1992 and served until July 18, 1993.
- January 22, 1993 Donna E. Shalala became Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS).
- April 7, 1993 The 1993 Trustees Report showed the date of the combined Old Age Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) Trust Funds exhaustion as 2036.
- June 22, 1993 SSA signed International Totalization Agreement with Greece.
- July 19, 1993 Dr. Lawrence Thompson appointed Acting Commissioner of Social Security and Principal Deputy Commissioner by HHS Secretary Shalala.
- August 10, 1993 President Clinton signed the *Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993* (P.L. 103-66).
- September 1993 SSA made the decision to reengineer the disability process.
- September 7, 1993 First report issued of Vice President Al Gore's National Performance Review.
- September 15, 1993 President Clinton nominated Dr. Shirley Sears Chater of Texas as Commissioner of Social Security.
- September 1993 Congressional Commission on the Notch created. President Clinton appoints Alan "Scotty" Campbell as Chairman.
- October 1993 The automatic cost-of-living (COLA) for benefits for December 1993 (paid in January 1994) was 2.6 percent.
- October 7, 1993 The Senate confirmed Dr. Chater as Commissioner of Social Security.
- October 8, 1993 Shirley S. Chater became Commissioner of Social Security.
- November 24, 1993 President Clinton signed the *Unemployment Compensation Amendments of 1993* (P.L. 103-152).

1994

- March 31, 1994 Proposal of the Disability Process Redesign workgroup released to Commissioner Chater.
- April 12, 1994 The 1994 Trustees Report showed the date of the combined OASDI Trust Funds exhaustion as 2029.
- May 17, 1994 SSA's Internet site was launched on the World-Wide Web (*SSA Online* at <http://www.ssa.gov>).
- June 1994 Commissioner Chater appointed Judy L. Chesser as Associate Commissioner for Legislation and Congressional Affairs. She was later named as Deputy Commissioner for Legislation and Congressional Affairs in March 1995 when SSA became an independent agency.
- June 6, 1994 Vice President Gore visited SSA headquarters to present SSA's first Hammer Award for its achievements in reinventing government.
- June 9, 1994 The members of the 1994 Social Security Advisory Council are named by HHS Secretary Shalala.
- June 9, 1994 The Office of Personnel Management presented the OPM Director's Award to SSA for outstanding work and family programs.
- June 22, 1994 Commissioner Chater and American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) President John Sturdivant signed the first national partnership agreement between SSA and AFGE. This partnership agreement marked the beginning of a new culture where labor and management shared accountability in accomplishing the Agency's mission of providing quality public service.
- July 1994 Following publication in the Federal Register and close of the public comment period, the final disability reengineering redesign proposal was released to Commissioner Chater.
- August 1994 Commissioner Chater appointed Dr. Susan M. Daniels Associate Commissioner for Disability. She was later named by Commissioner Apfel as Deputy Commissioner for Policy and Income Security Programs in April 1998 under a reorganization of one program and policy functions within SSA.

- August 1, 1994 Commissioner Chater appointed Carolyn W. Colvin as Deputy Commissioner for Policy and External Affairs. She was later named as Deputy Commissioner for Programs, Policy, Evaluation and Communications in March 1995 when SSA became an independent agency. Commissioner Apfel appointed Ms. Colvin as Deputy Commissioner for Operations in April 1998.
- August 15, 1994 President Clinton signed the *Social Security Independence and Program Improvements Act of 1994* (P.L. 103-296).
- September 1994 Commissioner Chater appointed Brian Coyne as SSA's Chief of Staff.
- September 1994 Commissioner Chater approved the disability-reengineering redesign and the final plan was released.
- October 1994 The automatic cost-of-living (COLA) for benefits for December 1994 (paid in January 1995) was 2.8 percent.
- October 1994 Lori L. Hansen was appointed by the Senate to serve on the Social Security Advisory Board. Her term is from October 1994 to September 2000.
- October 1994 Carolyn L. Weaver was appointed by the Senate to serve on the Social Security Advisory Board. Her term is from October 1994 to September 1997.
- October 22, 1994 President Clinton signed the *Social Security Domestic Employment Act of 1994* (P.L. 103-387).
- October 31, 1994 President Clinton signed the *Social Security Act Amendments of 1994* (P.L. 103-432).
- November 1994 Arthur "Pete" Singleton was appointed by the House to serve on the Social Security Advisory Board. His term was from November 1994 to October 1998. Mr. Singleton resigned in October 1996 to be the Majority Staff Director, House Ways and Means Committee.
- November 1994 Martha Keys was appointed by the House to serve on the Social Security Advisory Board. Her term was from November 1994 to September 1999.
- November 15, 1994 President Clinton nominated Shirley Chater to serve a six-year term as Commissioner of the independent SSA.

December 1994 Commissioner Chater appointed Joan E. Wainwright as Associate Commissioner for Public Affairs. She was later named as Associate Commissioner for Communications in March 1995 when SSA became an independent agency, and then as Deputy Commissioner for Communications in June 1996 when the Office of Communications reported directly to the Commissioner of SSA.

December 31, 1994 The bipartisan commission on the "notch" issued its report: "*Final Report on the Social Security 'Notch' Issue.*" The central finding of the Commission was that benefits paid to those in the 'Notch' years were equitable, and no remedial legislation was in order.

### 1995

February 1995 SSA's first *General Business Plan* published.

February 16, 1995 A confirmation hearing was held before the Senate Finance Committee on Commissioner Chater's nomination to serve a six-year term as Commissioner of Social Security. The Committee did not take any action on her nomination.

March 31, 1995 The Social Security Administration became an independent agency.

April 3, 1995 The 1995 Trustees Report showed the date of the combined OASDI Trust Funds exhaustion as 2030, a gain of one year from the year before.

April 1995 Commissioner Chater appointed Arthur J. Fried as General Counsel.

April 1995 Dalbar Financial Services, Inc., a source for information on customer service initiatives and trends rated SSA's telephone service representatives 1<sup>st</sup> in Accommodations, Attitude, Knowledge, and Ring Time in its World Class Benchmarking study. Other companies in the study were AT&T Universal Credit Cards, Disney Companies, Federal Express, L.L. Bean, Nordstrom, The Saturn Corporation, Southwest Airlines, and Xerox.

April 13, 1995 President Clinton appointed the Commissioner of Social Security to be a member of his Domestic Policy Council.

April 19, 1995 The Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma was bombed, killing 168 individuals, including 16 SSA employees.

July 20, 1995 Dr. Marilyn Moon and Stephen G. Kellison were appointed by President Clinton and confirmed by the Senate to serve four-year terms as Public Trustee of the Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance trust funds. Their terms began on July 20, 1995.

- August 1995 The President uses "recess appointment" to appoint former U.S. Senator Harlan Mathews to serve on the Social Security Advisory Board from January 1996 to January 1997. He served as Chair of the Board. Senator Mathews declined the resubmission of his nomination.
- August 1995 The President uses "recess appointment" to appoint Gerald M. Shea to the Social Security Advisory Board from January 1996 to January 1997.
- August 1995 The President uses "recess appointment" to appoint William C. Brooks as a Presidential recess appointee to the Social Security Advisory Board from January 1996 to September 1996.
- August 10, 1995 President Clinton nominated Linda Colvin Rhodes of Pennsylvania to be Deputy Commissioner of Social Security.
- August 10, 1995 President Clinton nominated David Williams to be Inspector General at SSA. The Senate confirmed David Williams as Inspector General on December 22, 1995.
- August 14, 1995 A series of public service announcements was launched by Commissioner Chater to educate the public about the value of Social Security benefits at a ceremony held at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Commissioner Chater was joined by First Lady Hillary Clinton and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan in celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Social Security.
- October 1995 The automatic cost-of-living (COLA) for benefits for December 1995 (paid in January 1996) was 2.6 percent.
- October 19, 1995 A Memorial Garden was dedicated in front of SSA headquarters in Baltimore, MD, to commemorate the SSA employees who lost their lives in the Oklahoma City bombing.
- November 14, 1995 Government-wide shutdown began, which lasted until November 20<sup>th</sup>.
- December 12, 1995 SSA held Hammer Award Ceremony for 14 teams, workgroups, or projects.
- December 16, 1995 Second Government shutdown began, which lasted until January 6<sup>th</sup>.
- December 31, 1995 Lawrence Thompson resigned as Principal Deputy Commissioner and took a position with the Urban Institute.

## 1996

- January 3, 1996 Commissioner Chater named John R. Dyer as Acting Principal Deputy Commissioner.
- January 23, 1996 Claims Representative Richard Dean, an SSA employee who survived the Oklahoma City bombing, was invited to sit with Mrs. Clinton during the President's annual State of the Union Address. The President introduced Mr. Dean in the course of his remarks.
- February 9, 1996 First meeting of the new SSA Advisory Board was held in Baltimore.
- February 23, 1996 Commissioner Chater announced a set of policy changes to improve the effectiveness of the Plans for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) feature of the SSI program. The changes grew out of a SSA workgroup report, along with audit reports by the General Accounting Office, SSA's Inspector General, and SSA's Office of Program and Integrity Reviews.
- March 1996 Commissioner Chater appointed D. Dean Mesterharm as Deputy Commissioner for Systems.
- March 5, 1996 Commissioner Chater and AFGE President John Sturdivant signed a national partnership agreement between AFGE and SSA effective March 5, 1996.
- March 11, 1996 Linda Colvin Rhodes, nominated to be Deputy Commissioner of Social Security, withdrew from consideration. The Senate had taken no action on the nomination.
- March 11, 1996 Commissioner Chater announced that SSA agreed to settle the case of *Hart vs. Chater* in which a child, conceived through artificial means after the death of her father, was previously denied survivors benefits. SSA's position was that the settlement was not precedent-setting.
- March 21, 1996 SSA launched its Interactive Video Teletraining (IVT) System with an inaugural broadcast to the International Distance Learning Conference in Crystal City, Virginia. SSA planned to use IVT to replace most of its in-person training in order to save money on travel and related training expenses.
- March 25-27, 1996 A government-wide conference on "reinventing government" was held in Bethesda, Maryland. Vice President Gore was the keynote speaker. He singled-out SSA's 800-number for praise for its highly rated service.

- March 29, 1996 President Clinton signed the *Contract With America Advancement Act of 1996* (P.L. 104-121).
- April 1996 SSA received Hammer Award for the Birmingham Telephone Claims unit.
- April 15, 1996 The Social Security Advisory Council held its final public meeting in Washington, D.C.
- April 24, 1996 SSA published final rules in the Federal Register that established procedures under which SSA may impose civil monetary penalties on any Social Security or SSI applicant or beneficiary who makes a false statement in order to obtain benefits. This civil authority is in addition to any criminal penalties that may apply, and is a new power granted to SSA under Section 206(b) of the *Social Security Independence and Program Improvements Act of 1994*.
- April 26, 1996 President Clinton signed the *Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriations Act of 1996* (P.L. 104-134).
- April 28-29, 1996 The Social Security Representative Payment Advisory Committee met at SSA headquarters in Baltimore to discuss recommendations for changes in representative payee policies and procedures.
- June 5, 1996 The 1996 Trustees Report showed the date of the combined OASDI Trust Funds exhaustion as 2029, a gain of one year from last year.
- June 7, 1996 Termination notices began going out to 220,000 Social Security and SSI disability beneficiaries who were receiving benefits due to drug addiction or alcoholism. Under the law, these benefits were to be stopped by January 1, 1997.
- June 14, 1996 SSA awarded its IWS/LAN computer systems contract to the Unisys Corporation. The initial award was for \$185,195,445 with a projected seven-year value of \$279,596,486. The contract provides for the acquisition of all equipment needed to support a base quantity of 925 Local Area Networks (LANs), with an optional quantity of an additional 817 LANs.
- June 20-22, 1996 SSA's Advisory Committees for Black, Hispanic, Pacific Asian, Women, and Employees with Disabilities held their first joint "diversity conference" in Miami, Florida.

- August 22, 1996 President Clinton signed the "*Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996*." This "welfare reform" legislation terminated SSI eligibility for most non-citizens and made more stringent the standards for children to receive SSI disability benefits.
- September 5, 1996 SSA Hammer Award Ceremony for 13 teams or projects.
- September 12, 1996 SSA received the "Best in Class" award at the Internet Commerce Expo (sponsored by Computer World Magazine) in the Government/Public Administration category for its implementation of the Personal Earnings and Benefit Estimate Statement (PEBES).
- September 30, 1996 President Clinton signed *An Act making omnibus consolidated appropriations for FY 1997* (P.L. 104-208). This law included SSA's FY 1997 appropriations and the *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996*.
- October 1996 The automatic cost-of-living (COLA) for benefits for December 1996 (paid in January 1997) was 2.9 percent.
- November 5, 1996 Commissioner Shirley S. Chater submitted her resignation to President Clinton, effective January 31, 1997. She extended her effective date to February 28, 1997, at the request of the President. She took a position as Regents Professor in the University of California System.
- November 7, 1996 The Representative Payee Advisory Committee submitted its final report to the Commissioner. The Committee, composed of outside experts, made 25 specific recommendations for improving SSA's administration of the representative payee function.
- November 25, 1996 SSA's Office of the Inspector General opened a Social Security Fraud Hotline at 1-800-269-0271.
- December 1996 The SSA field office structure was revised. The new structure eliminated the District Office, Branch Office, and Resident Station designations. All sites were redesignated as Level 1, 2, 3, or 4 Social Security Field Offices. As of that point, there were a total of 1,352 "Social Security Field Offices."

## 1997

- January 6, 1997 The Social Security Advisory Council released its report. The Council offered three options for changing Social Security: (1) a Maintain Benefits plan; (2) an Individual Accounts plan; and (3) a Personal Savings Account plan.

January 13, 1997 SSA received Hammer Award for the Direct Services Unit (redeployment of personnel).

February 11, 1997 SSA's proposed regulations implementing the changes to the childhood disability standards were published in the *Federal Register*.

February 11, 1997 SSA's proposed final regulations for cycling of benefit payments were published.

February 26, 1997 President Clinton named Dr. John J. Callahan to be Acting Commissioner of Social Security effective March 1, 1997. Dr. Callahan was the HHS Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget at the time of his appointment. He served as Acting Commissioner until September 29, 1997.

March 1997 The Social Security Advisory Board issued its first formal report, entitled "*Developing Social Security Policy: How the Social Security Administration Can Provide Greater Policy Leadership*."

March 1997 Jo Anne Barnhart was nominated by the House to serve on the Social Security Advisory Board. Her term is from March 1997 to September 1998. Ms. Barnhart replaced Arthur "Pete" Singleton who resigned to accept a position of staff director on the House Ways & Means Committee.

March 1997 Acting Commissioner Callahan appointed Paul Barnes as Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources.

April 2, 1997 SSA announced new rules in the Federal Register that eliminated the Annual Earnings Reports previously required from retirees under age 70 who are still working. SSA will now use information from the W-2 reports or tax records to track the earnings levels of working beneficiaries.

April 9, 1997 SSA announced that it was temporarily suspending its Online Personal Earnings and Benefit Estimate Statement (PEBES) service over the Internet due to questions raised in the news media about the security and privacy of the records. Following the publication of the news stories on April 7th, SSA experienced a surge in traffic to its Internet site that at its peak included 600 requests per second.

- April 10, 1997 Acting Commissioner John J. Callahan announced that SSA would hire 150 former welfare recipients each year for four years as SSA's contribution to the President's welfare reform initiatives.
- April 24, 1997 The 1997 Trustees Report showed the date of the combined OASDI Trust Funds exhaustion as 2029, the same as last year.
- May 1997 The cycling of Social Security benefit payments began for June 1997 checks.
- May 1997 SSA received Hammer Award for the Ft. Myers Team Experiment that involved a union and management agreement to delegate authority to employees.
- May 23, 1997 President Clinton nominated Kenneth S. Apfel to serve as the 13th Commissioner of Social Security. Mr. Apfel was the Associate Director for Human Resources at OMB at the time of his nomination. Prior to that, he was HHS's Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget.
- May 30, 1997 The first *Annual Report of the Supplemental Security Income Program* was released to President Clinton and to the Congress. In the *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996*, the Congress required the Commissioner of Social Security to report annually on the status of the SSI program. In January 1997, 6.3 million individuals received Federal SSI payments averaging \$342 per month. Federal expenditures for cash payments under the SSI program during calendar 1996 totaled \$26.5 billion, and the cost of administering the SSI program in FY 1996 was \$2.0 billion.
- June 23, 1997 Hammer Award Ceremony for 25 units, teams, or projects was held at SSA's headquarters.
- August 5, 1997 President Clinton signed H.R. 2015, "*The Balanced Budget Act of 1997*," into law. This law restores SSI eligibility to certain cohorts of non-citizens whose eligibility otherwise would be terminated under the "welfare reform" of 1996.
- September 1997 Former Commissioner of Social Security Stanford G. Ross was nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate to serve on the Social Security Advisory Board from October 1997 to September 2002. President Clinton named him as Chair of the Board.
- September 2, 1997 President Clinton nominated Jane G. Gould of New York to be Deputy Commissioner of Social Security.

- September 4, 1997 Acting Commissioner John Callahan released the report of the study of SSA's online PEBES service and announced the Agency's decision to make the service available again beginning in January 1998. The new version of the service will have additional security and privacy safeguards. Earnings information will no longer be provided online (only benefit estimates) and a personal code will be needed to receive the benefit estimate.
- September 8-12, 1997 SSA's s first National Anti-Fraud Conference was held in Baltimore. The theme of the conference was *New Approaches in a New Environment*. Over 450 SSA employees attended the Conference along with officials from the General Accounting Office and State disability determination units.
- September 19, 1997 Kenneth S. Apfel was unanimously confirmed by the Senate as SSA's 13<sup>th</sup> Commissioner and first Commissioner of the Independent Agency.
- September 29, 1997 Kenneth Apfel became the Commissioner of Social Security. A formal swearing-in ceremony was held at SSA Headquarters. Outgoing Acting Commissioner Callahan conducted the swearing-in, and Franklin Raines, Director of the Office of Management and Budget represented the White House.
- October 1997 The automatic cost-of-living (COLA) for benefits for December 1997 (paid in January 1998) was 2.1 percent.
- October 2, 1997 Commissioner Apfel formally released the new strategic plan, *Keeping the Promise: Strategic Plan 1997-2002*, to the Agency's senior staff and announced his intention to use the plan as the foundation of SSA's decisionmaking for the future.
- December 1, 1997 World AIDS Day—The Commissioner affirmed SSA's commitment to working with many AIDS advocacy groups to ensure that people affected by HIV/AIDS were educated about Social Security programs for which they may be eligible.
- December 16, 1997 Commissioner Apfel announced, that in response to President Clinton's commitment to making modern computer technology an integral part of every classroom in America, SSA donated over 600 surplus computers to schools across the USA to kick-off their "Computers for Kids" program.
- December 17, 1997 Commissioner Apfel announced the results of his "top to bottom" review of the SSI childhood disability determination process.

## 1998

- January 1998 Sylvester J. Schieber was appointed by the Senate to serve on the Social Security Advisory Board. His term is from January 1998 to September 2003. He replaced Carolyn Weaver on the Board.
- January 27, 1998 In his State of the Union address President Clinton emphasized the central task of addressing the solvency of the Social Security program. He stated his view that any budget surplus should not be used in any way until we "Save Social Security First."
- February 9, 1998 President Clinton delivered a major address on Social Security at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. as the unofficial launch of the year-long process of discussing the future of Social Security.
- February 18, 1998 Notices were sent to 86,000 families whose child, or children, previously lost SSI eligibility under the Welfare Reform law. The notices provide a second opportunity to either request an appeal or to request payment continuation during appeal. This is one of the actions flowing out of Commissioner Apfel's review of the childhood disability program and announced in his December 1997 report.
- March 13, 1998 The nomination of Jane G. Gould to be the Deputy Commissioner of Social Security was withdrawn. The Senate had not taken any action on the nomination.
- April 7, 1998 President Clinton participated in the first of the three national forums on Social Security (The Great Social Security Debate). The forum was held on the campus of Penn Valley Community College in Kansas City, Missouri.
- April 12, 1998 Commissioner Apfel appointed Dr. Jane L. Ross as Deputy Commissioner for Policy.
- April 16, 1998 SSA published in the Federal Register a notice requesting applications for a cooperative agreement to establish a Retirement Research Consortium based in two universities and supporting SSA's policy development process.
- April 30, 1998 The 1998 Trustees Report showed the date of the combined OASDI Trust Funds exhaustion as 2032, a gain of three years from last year.
- May 1998 Commissioner Apfel appointed Yvette S. Jackson as Deputy Commissioner for Finance, Assessment and Management.

- May 6, 1998 SSA published a final regulation in the Federal Register governing procedures for acquiescing in circuit court decisions which conflict with the Agency's interpretation of the Act or regulations.
- May 29, 1998 SSA released its second *Annual Report of the Supplemental Security Income Program*. In January 1998, 6.2 million individuals received monthly Federal SSI payments averaging \$335. Federal expenditures for cash payments under the SSI program during calendar 1997 totaled \$26.7 billion, and the cost of administering the SSI program in FY 1997 was \$2.1 billion.
- June 22, 1998 President Clinton issued an order directing SSA to cooperate with other federal agencies in a concerted effort to promote utilization of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) enacted into law in 1997. Among other things, SSA will distribute information and application forms in its local field offices.
- July 1, 1998 Vice President Gore participated in the second national forum on Social Security held in Providence, RI.
- July 6, 1998 President Clinton launched a new campaign to ensure that eligible Medicare beneficiaries are informed about the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) provisions of the law, which pays Medicare premiums for poor beneficiaries. SSA and HHS will have joint responsibility for a massive public information and outreach campaign.
- July 27, 1998 President Clinton hosted the third national forum on the future of Social Security held in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
- August 12, 1998 SAP America/Stevie Wonder Vision Awards Program recognized SSA as the winner of the Siemens Award Of Excellence and received \$35,000 for its technology infrastructure to support visually impaired employees.
- August 12, 1998 SSA received the Hammer Award for the Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA) Screening unit.
- August 13, 1998 SSA hosted its "One America" diversity conference in Atlanta, Georgia. The program included prominent speakers, workshops and exhibits, providing valuable information about customer service, professional skills, career planning, personal motivation and technological advances.

- September 9, 1998 SSA received the John Sturdivant National Partnership Award.
- September 24, 1998 SSA held a Hammer Award Ceremony for nine teams or projects.
- October 1998 The automatic cost-of-living (COLA) for benefits for December 1998 (paid in January 1999) was 1.3 percent. This was the lowest COLA in its 25-year history.
- October 1998 Jo Anne Barnhart was nominated by the House to serve on the Social Security Advisory Board. Her term is from October 1998 to September 2004. This is Ms. Barnhart's second term on the Board.
- October 2, 1998 SSA announced the selection of two university research consortiums to be participants in SSA's Retirement Research Consortium (SRRC). The two lead universities are Boston College and the University of Michigan, in partnership with 13 additional collaborators.
- October 9, 1998 SSA published its first *SSI Management Report* assessing the management challenges facing the program and what SSA is doing to meet them.
- October 27, 1998 As part of the national discussion on Social Security, the President hosted a roundtable discussion on women and retirement security at the White House on October 27. The White House released a paper, Women and Retirement Security at this event which details some basic facts on women and retirement, including the importance of Social Security.
- October 28, 1998 President Clinton signed the *Noncitizen Benefit Clarification and Other Technical Amendment Act of 1998* (P.L. 105-306).
- November 4, 1998 Vice President Gore announced a new federal policy designed to make it easier for victims of domestic violence to obtain new Social Security numbers.
- November 16, 1998 SSA launched a new pilot project allowing people to apply for retirement or survivors benefits through SSA's 800 number telephone service.
- November 16, 1998 SSA mailed the 50 millionth Personal Earnings and Benefit Estimate Statement (PEBES) since it began issuing them.
- December 3-4, 1998 SSA, in conjunction with Howard University, held a two-day symposium in Washington, D.C. on the SSI program, focusing on future demographic trends and their effects on the program.
- December 8-9, 1998 The first ever White House Conference on Social Security was held in Washington, D.C.

December 28, 1998 President Clinton announced that SSA's computer systems were fully Y2K compliant.

#### 1999

January 1999 The percentage of beneficiaries receiving their payments by direct deposit hit 75 percent, with 15 States having rates over 80 percent.

January 13, 1999 President Clinton announced a set of disability initiatives aimed at removing barriers for people with disabilities that want to return to work.

January 19, 1999 In his State of the Union Address, President Clinton laid out his proposal to "Save Social Security First." He proposed transferring 62 percent of the unified budget surpluses to Social Security over the next 15 years; saving 15 percent of the surpluses to shore up Medicare; and investing 12 percent of the surpluses into new Universal Savings Accounts as additions to Social Security. He also called for repeal of the Retirement Earnings Test.

February 1, 1999 SSA given an "A" rating in management performance by the Government Performance Project of the Maxwell School at Syracuse University (only Federal agency to receive an "A").

February 12, 1999 Vice President Gore and Commissioner Apfel announced, at an event in Albany, N. Y., a proposal for the first increase in the substantial gainful activity (SGA) level since 1990. They proposed raising the SGA amount from \$500 a month to \$700 a month, reflecting the level of growth in average wages.

March 3, 1999 The House of Representatives passed H.J. Res. 32, a sense of Congress resolution, by a vote of 416 to 1. This non-binding resolution put the House on record as supporting an initiative to strengthen and protect the Social Security program for the 21st century.

March 11, 1999 SSA issued a comprehensive disability program management plan *Social Security and Supplemental Security Income Disability Programs: Managing for Today Planning for Tomorrow*.

April 12, 1999 The 1999 Trustees Report showed the date of the combined OASDI Trust Fund exhaustion as 2034, a gain of two years from last year.

May 4-6, 1999 SSA held its 1999 National Anti-Fraud Conference in Baltimore. This conference was part of an increased emphasis on program integrity issues.

- May 5, 1999            The first 450 resettled refugees from Kosovo landed at McGuire Air Force base in New Jersey. Among those processing the new arrivals were SSA employees who were taking Social Security number applications and assessing them for potential future SSI applications.
- May 11, 1999            The Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Social Security Subcommittee notified SSA that its Fiscal Year 2000 Performance Plan ranks among the highest in government with a score of 84.5 out of a possible 100.
- May 20-21, 1999        SSA's Retirement Research Consortium held its first annual Conference in Washington, D.C. to report on the initial set of research findings under this project.
- May 24, 1999            A unanimous Supreme Court ruled, in the case of *Cleveland v. Policy Management Systems*, that the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the requirements for Social Security disability benefits are not incompatible and that filing a disability claim does not bar a person from seeking relief under ADA provisions. This ruling was consistent with the position SSA and the Administration had taken on the issue.
- May 28, 1999            SSA released its third *Annual Report of the Supplemental Security Income Program*. In January 1999, 6.3 million individuals received monthly Federal SSI payments averaging \$341. Federal expenditures for cash payments under the SSI program during calendar 1998 totaled \$27.7 billion, and the cost of administering the SSI program in FY 1998 was \$2.3 billion.
- June 7, 1999            The White House Conference on Mental Health was held. President Clinton directed OPM to achieve mental health and substance abuse parity in the FEHB Program for contract year 2001. The Clinton/Gore Administration announced a historic 5-year \$10 million Affective Disorder Demonstration Project at the SSA to help people with mental illnesses return to work. Vice President Gore announced SSA would offer up to 1,000 Social Security Disability beneficiaries with affective disorders the opportunity to participate in the project to test improved treatments that could result in better functioning and a return to the workforce.
- June 15, 1999            The Americans Discuss Social Security project of the Pew Charitable Trust gave its Final Report to Commissioner Apfel.
- June 28, 1999            SSA Hammer Award Ceremony for eleven teams or projects.

- July 19, 1999 SSA completed Phase I of its Intelligent Workstation/Local Area Network (IWS/LAN) computer modernization effort. This project, one of the largest information technology projects ever undertaken by the federal government, placed more than 75,000 workstations and 1,742 LANs in SSA and State DDS facilities around the country.
- July 26, 1999 Commissioner Apfel announced in "SSA News Bytes" that the Office of Communications had received two Emmy Awards from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for the public service ad—The Future of Social Security.
- July 29, 1999 President Clinton nominated James G. Huse, Jr. to be the Inspector General at SSA.
- August 5, 1999 SSA released its Hearing Process Improvement Plan to improve the hearing process, with a specific objective of reducing processing times from a projected level of 313 days in FY 1999, to less than 200 days in FY 2002.
- September 30, 1999 Commissioner Apfel announced that the University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign was selected to participate in the Social Security Administration's Disability Research Institute. The Five-year program will provide \$1.25 million in funding to the university in the first year.
- September 30, 1999 SSA awarded a contract to begin development of an Electronic Death Registration process. The goal is to develop systems that will allow the States to transmit death reports to SSA electronically.
- October 1999 The automatic cost-of-living (COLA) for benefits for December 1999 (paid in January 2000) was 2.4 percent. The 2000 COLA will be 3.5 percent.
- October 1999 Martha Keys was nominated by the House to serve on the Social Security Advisory Board. Her term is from October 1999 to September 2005. This is Ms. Keys second term.
- October 1999 SSA received Hammer Award for the "Atlanta One-Stop".
- October 1, 1999 President Clinton nominated William A. Halter of Arkansas to be the Deputy Commissioner at SSA.
- October 1, 1999 SSA began mailing 125 million Social Security Statements to all workers

25 years of age or older. Statements will now be sent on an annual basis.

- October 8, 1999 The Federal Record Service Corporation (FRSC) agreed in a court settlement to cease its activities and to pay substantial financial penalties. FRSC had been charging the public for the same Social Security card services SSA provides for free.
- October 20, 1999 As part of President Clinton's Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities, SSA and the Small Business Administration signed a partnership agreement to help adults with disabilities find gainful employment or become entrepreneurs. Vice President Al Gore witnessed the signing ceremony in the Indian Treaty Room of the Old Executive Office Building.
- November 10, 1999 The Senate, by unanimous consent, confirmed the appointments of William A. Halter to be Deputy Commissioner of Social Security for the term expiring January 19, 2001 and James G. Huse, Jr. to be Inspector General of the Social Security Administration.
- November 15, 1999 SSA released its *Report on Initiatives to Improve National 800 Number and Program Service Center Service to the Public*.
- November 18, 1999 SSA hosted its first Electronic Service Conference and Exposition at SSA headquarters in Baltimore.
- November 22, 1999 William A. Halter was sworn in as Deputy Commissioner of Social Security.
- November 22, 1999 James G. Huse, Jr., was sworn in as Inspector General of Social Security.
- December 13, 1999 The University of Michigan announced that the Social Security Administration received a score of 82 in the latest American Customer Satisfaction Index Survey (ACSI). This score is one of the highest earned by participating Federal government agencies and 10 points higher than the comparable private sector index.
- December 14, 1999 President Clinton signed the *Foster Care Independence Act of 1999* (P.L. 106-169).
- December 17, 1999 President Clinton signed the *Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999* (P.L. 106-170). The legislation is the most significant change in disability policy since passage of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* in 1990. The signing ceremony took place at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C.

## 2000

- February 2000 SSA's Internet service, SSA Online, reached the rank of #10 on the list of most frequently visited federal government Web sites.
- February 15, 2000 SSA launched its Electronic Newsletter (eNews) through which visitors are able to subscribe to Social Security enews, a monthly electronic newsletter providing brief items on the latest Social Security information of public interest.
- February 16, 2000 SSA signed International Totalization Agreement with Chile, the first such agreement with a South American country.
- March 13, 2000 SSA signed International Totalization Agreement with Korea, the first such agreement with an Asian country.
- March 14, 2000 SSA posted on its Web site the new Appeals Council Process Improvement Action Plan, an outline of short-term initiatives to improve processing of the Appeals Council review of hearing decisions.
- March 14, 2000 Results from SSA's annual customer satisfaction survey showed significant improvement in ratings for Fiscal Year (FY) 1999 from FY 1998. Overall satisfaction with SSA's service rose to 88 percent, up from 82 percent in FY 1998. Also, 44 percent of the respondents rated service "excellent," up from 30 percent last year.
- March 14 -16, 2000 SSA sponsored the National American Indian – Alaska Native Conference in Denver, Colorado.
- March 30, 2000 The 2000 Trustees Report showed the date of the combined OASDI Trust Fund exhaustion as 2037, a gain of three years from last year.
- April 2000 SSA issued its FY 2001 Government Performance and Results Act Annual Performance Plan and Revised Final FY 2000 Performance Plan.
- April 6, 2000 Commissioner Apfel, and AFGE President Bobby Harnage, signed a new four-year collective bargaining contract.
- April 7, 2000 President Clinton signed the *Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 2000* (P.L. 106-182) at a White House Ceremony. The Act eliminated the Retirement Earnings Test for beneficiaries at or above Normal Retirement Age.

April 7, 2000 SSA launched its electronic Retirement Planner as part of its Internet services. The Planner was announced by President Clinton at the signing ceremony for the repeal of the retirement earnings test included in the *Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 2000*.

May 19, 2000 SSA's Office of Communications issued its Communications Report on strategies to improve the effectiveness of SSA's efforts to educate the public about the Social Security program.

May 30, 2000 SSA released its fourth *Annual Report of the Supplemental Security Income Program*. In January 2000, 6.3 million individuals received monthly Federal SSI payments averaging \$350. Federal expenditures for cash payments under the SSI program during calendar 1999 totaled \$27.7 billion, and the cost of administering the SSI program in FY 1999 was \$2.5 billion.

June 2000 SSA was successful in obtaining \$35 million in supplemental funding to upgrade personal computers for Agency employees.

June 13, 2000 SSA announced it is partnering with Commerce Net, a nonprofit consortium, to test a variety of Internet technologies to determine if they can be used by the agency to enhance customer service.

June 13, 2000 SSA held Hammer Award Ceremony for six SSA special teams.

July 2000 SSA received the Pioneer Award for Access American for Seniors from the E-gov 2000 Selection Committee.

July 11, 2000 SSA launched a new interactive application on its Internet site allowing Medicare beneficiaries to apply for a replacement Medicare card online.

July 24, 2000 Formal swearing in and first meeting of the President's Work Incentives Advisory Panel.

July 26, 2000 President Clinton announced three new regulatory proposals to: (1) raise the SGA level automatically each year based on increases in the national average wage index; (2) increase the Trial Work Period amount from \$200 to \$530 a month and provide automatic yearly increases; (3) allow disabled students receiving SSI to exclude more income before their benefits are affected (more than triple the current amount). The changes were announced at a ceremony commemorating the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of the *Americans with Disabilities Act*.

August 4, 2000 President Clinton released a special statement in acknowledgement of the

65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Social Security Act.

- August 5, 2000 SSA, in partnership with the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library in Hyde Park, New York, hosted a special commemorative program in honor of the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Social Security Act.
- August 14, 2000 Commissioner Apfel dedicated a 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Garden on the grounds of SSA headquarters in Baltimore.
- August 31, 2000 Based on data from the Bureau of the Public Debt, the invested assets of the combined OASI and DI Trust Funds topped \$1 trillion.
- September 2000 Agency launches SSA's Mandate Against Red-Tape (SMART) initiative, in accordance with President Clinton's April 21, 1998 memorandum on Streamlining the Granting of Waivers.
- September 7, 2000 Commissioner Apfel announced the release of SSA's *2010 Vision* document, charting the strategic changes ahead for SSA in the next decade.
- September 14, 2000 SSA launched its year 2000 "Computers for Kids" campaign by donating 6,000 computers to Baltimore, MD city schools. The Commissioner announced that SSA would donate over 30,000 computers and equipment to public schools and educationally-related non-profit institutions nationwide during the next five months in conjunction with President Clinton's Digital Divide Initiative.
- September 22, 2000 The Government Executive Magazine awarded SSA's Inmate Project the 2000 Government Technology Leadership Award for automating the receipt and processing of inmate reports.
- October 2000 Gerald M. Shea was appointed by President Clinton and confirmed by the Senate to serve on the Social Security Advisory Board. His term is from October 2000 to September 2004. Mr. Shea previously served a recess appointment on the Board.
- October 2000 Mark A. Weinberger was appointed by President Clinton and confirmed by the Senate to serve on the Social Security Advisory Board. His term is from October 2000 to September 2006.
- October 2000 David Podoff was appointed by the Senate to serve on the Social Security

Advisory Board. His term is from October 2000 to September 2006. He replaced Lori Hansen on the Board.

- October 3, 2000 Commissioner Apfel announced that when his term expires in January 2001 he would leave government to take a position with the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas in Austin. Commissioner Apfel will hold the Sid Richardson Chair in Public Affairs, a position previously held by Wilbur Cohen, one of Social Security's most important pioneers.
- October 12, 2000 SSA announced that its expanded online Benefits Planner now includes information on disability and survivors' benefits, as well as retirement benefits.
- October 25, 2000 President Clinton announced that SSA is awarding \$8 million in grants to 43 non-profit organizations and/or state agencies in 26 states and two territories to provide benefit planning, assistance and outreach for persons with disabilities who are attempting to return to work. These grants are part of The Ticket to Work initiative.
- October 28, 2000 President Clinton signed the *Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000* (P.L. 106-386).
- October 28, 2000 Dr. John L. Palmer and Dr. Thomas R. Saving were appointed by President Clinton and confirmed by the Senate to serve four-year terms as Public Trustee of the Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance trust funds. Their terms began on October 28, 2000.
- November 2, 2000 SSA Deputy Commissioner Halter announced the availability of SSA's new online application process for Social Security retirement claims. He also announced ~~that SSA's 800-number telephone system would take~~ immediate retirement claims.
- November 30, 2000 Commissioner ~~Apfel~~ announced that SSA has received the *Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting* for its FY 1999 Accountability Report.