



Public Printer's
Message

ON NOVEMBER 20, 2002, THE UNITED STATES Senate confirmed me as the 24th Public Printer of the United States. My printing background has familiarized me with the Government Printing Office and its mission. GPO has had a proud history; one built on innovation, craftsmanship, scale, flexibility and a singular dedication to meeting the printing needs of our Government and the information needs of our people. But the past is not necessarily prologue to the future. Printing, once the world's only mass communications medium, has seen its sun eclipsed first by radio, then television, and now the Internet.

We have heard the coming of the Internet compared to the coming of the printing press. Many have wondered whether the Internet will eventually replace printing, as we know it. Perhaps, but I do not see it happening in our lifetime and for many years thereafter. Instead, we have a period in front of us where we will need to sort out what continues to belong in print and what best belongs in information retrieval systems that allow users to define their own information needs, then search against a huge database of information to retrieve only what is needed.

And therein lies the challenge for the GPO. Like every other manufacturing business in America, the GPO is going to have to re-engineer itself if it is to remain relevant and viable for the future. It must step back and take a new look at the changing and emerging information needs of its customers and develop a deeper understanding of its true strengths so that it can determine how best to build a new business model. Then it must convince Congress and its customers to support its future plan. As Public Printer, I am leading this effort. GPO's plan will present a new vision, will set out specific and measurable short- and long- term objectives and goals, and will have budget and timetable details.

I look forward to this unique opportunity to reshape the GPO for its 21st century mission. It is my honor to lead the GPO as we enter the next information era. My goal is to head a highly motivated, quick responding, technologically innovative, world-class organization that will make us all proud.

This report characterizes the results of fiscal year 2002, which was completed before I took office. As the financial tables show, GPO sustained an operational loss of over \$15 million, continuing a pattern begun in the past decade. My objective is to end that pattern in fiscal year 2004. During

fiscal year 2002, GPO also faced a strong challenge in the form of an alternative printing policy proposal advanced by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). I agree that there is a lot to be done to improve the way Federal printing and information dissemination is carried out by the GPO today. Agencies have a right to expect excellent service from us and they will get it.

To fully carry out my plans, I am relying on the completion of a Government-wide study of printing and information policy currently being conducted by the U.S. General Accounting Office under orders from Congress, with a due date of December 2003. That study will provide us with an independent, factual basis for developing a new business model for the GPO in cooperation with OMB and our other stakeholders, a model that will serve as the basis for revising and reforming Title 44. Following its completion, I want to work with OMB so that at the end of the day, we implement a vision for the future of Federal printing and information policy that is cooperative and in the best interests of all concerned. At the same time, however, until all the facts are fully known about the current system of printing and information dissemination and all the stakeholders have had an opportunity to contribute their input, I believe that efforts to dismantle it will have negative consequences, both foreseen and unintended, on the cost of Federal printing and on public access to Government information.

As I have stated on many occasions since my nomination, it is a high honor and a humbling experience to be selected by the President to head a major Government agency, particularly one as venerable and important as the Government Printing Office. I look forward to working with our more than 3,000 talented and diverse employees to ensure that the GPO remains flexible, forward-thinking, and at the forefront of print and information processing technology.

Bruce R. James



Public Printer
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