NSF Report to RVTEC
October 2008

OCE Integrative Program Section Staffing

- Section Head position was filled by **Bob Houtman**, formerly of ONR. He replaced Dolly Dieter

- **Matt Hawkins**, formerly of U. of Delaware, was hired as Program Manager for SSSE and Ship Acquisitions. He replaced Dolly Dieter

- **Jim Holik** was hired as Program Manager for Technical Services and Oceanographic Instrumentation. He replaced Sandy Shor

- **Linda Goad** continues to rule over Ship Operations

- **Brian Midson** has been assigned Deep Submergence Facilities. He replaced Dolly Dieter.

FY 2009 Budget

- **The NSF Appropriation for FY 2009 has not been passed. NSF is currently operating under a Continuing Resolution which runs through March, 2009.**

- **Modest increases have been included in the House and Senate bills but the budget is not signed into law yet so we wait and see.**

OCE Facilities
Budget planning for FY 09

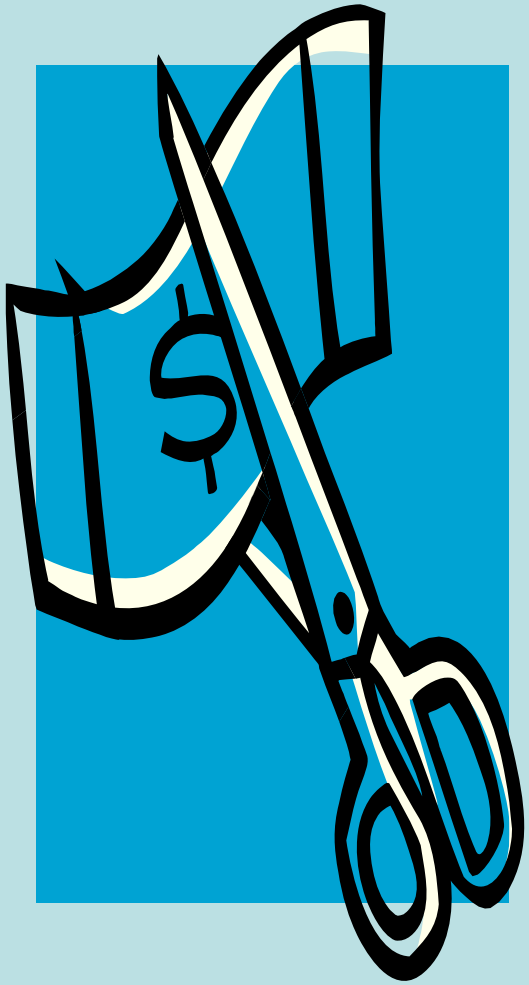
- **FY 09 again looks to be a very challenging year with Ship Operations projecting major shortfalls.**

- **The technicians and instrumentation programs will be impacted as well.**

Facilities Budget Planning

- **In 2009, Globals are projected to have good schedules, East Coast Intermediate schedules are weak however, layups suggested.**

- **Technicians and instrumentation programs funding are expected to be similarly stressed.**



Pressures on 09 Tech Budget

- 2 CLIVAR Cruises: 1.8M
- 3 Long Core Cruises: 1+M
- Langseth (less carryforward if any)
- Programmatic EIS
- Data Initiative
- Tech Pool Prototype
- Van Pool

Ship Layups
(NSF Recommendations)

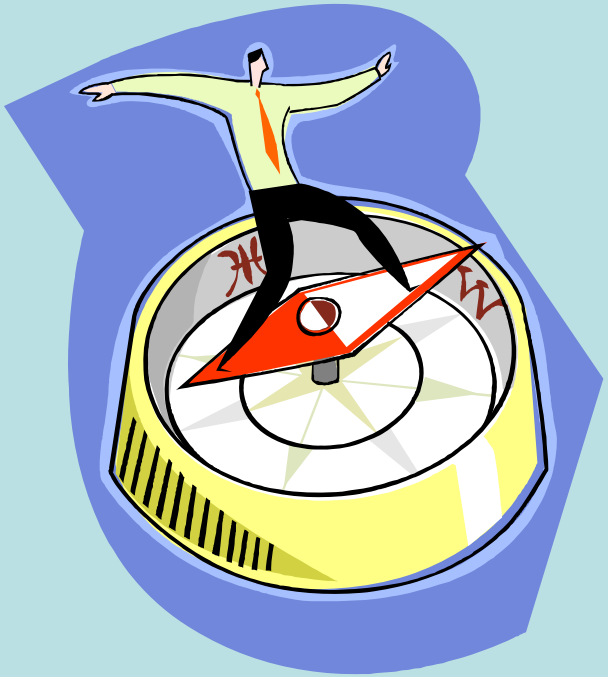
- Lay up one NSF Intermediate Class ship on the east coast and fund only a partial schedule for ***Seward Johnson*** due to economical alternatives for several cruises that still meet the funded science requirements.

- Determination of whether to lay up ***Endeavor*** or ***Oceanus*** to be based on input from the operating institutions regarding cost of operations, contributions to operations and the impact and cost of lay ups for the non-operating vessel's institution.

- Plan on a partial lay up for the ***New Horizon*** with no new NSF funded cruises

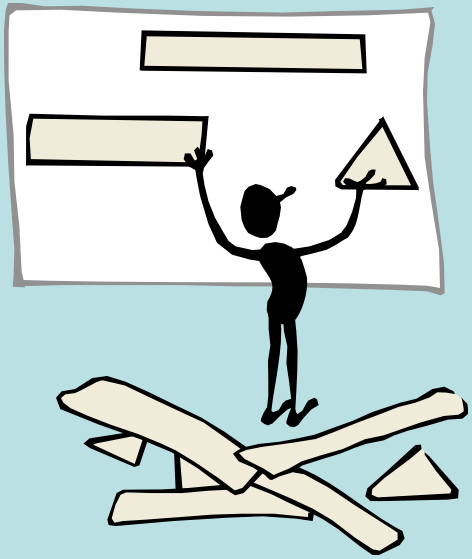
NSF Update

- **Alaska Region Research Vessel (ARRV) was delayed a year but completed it's FDR last week**
- **Regional Class Research Vessels (RCRV) design study continues and should be completed this year**



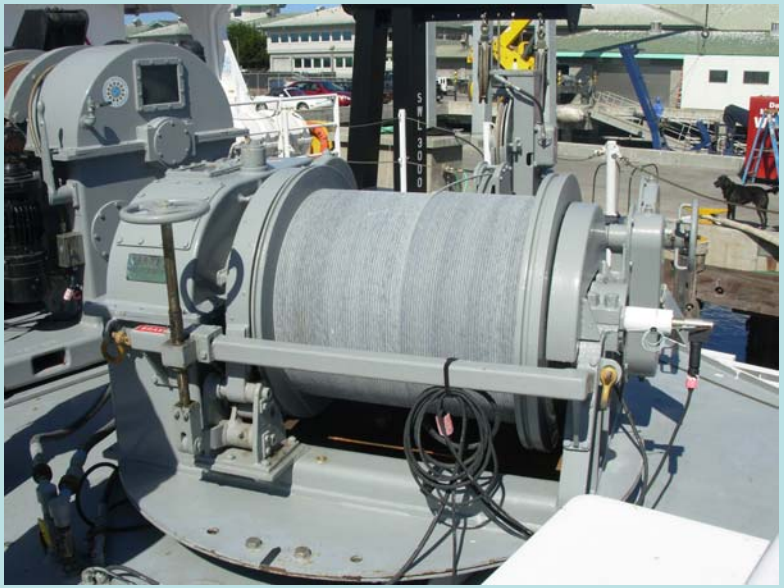
New Initiatives for 2009

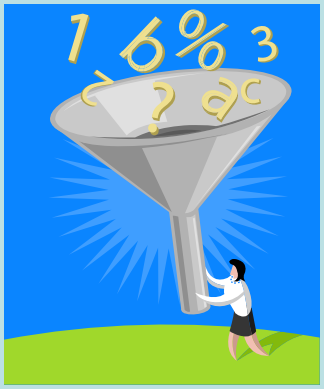
- **Pools: Van, Wire and Winch**
- **Fleet wide data collection and archiving**
- **Technician Pool**



A New Way to Handle the Equipment Pools

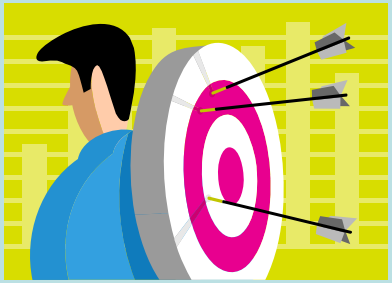
- **Van, Winch and Wire pools will have stand alone budgets to include salary, maintenance and shipping**
- **Inventories will be managed and maintained on UNOLS web site**
- **Van pool funded under Oceanographic Instrumentation, Wire and Winch pools funded under SSSE.**
- **OBS's ??**





DATA: Rolling Deck to Repository (R2R)

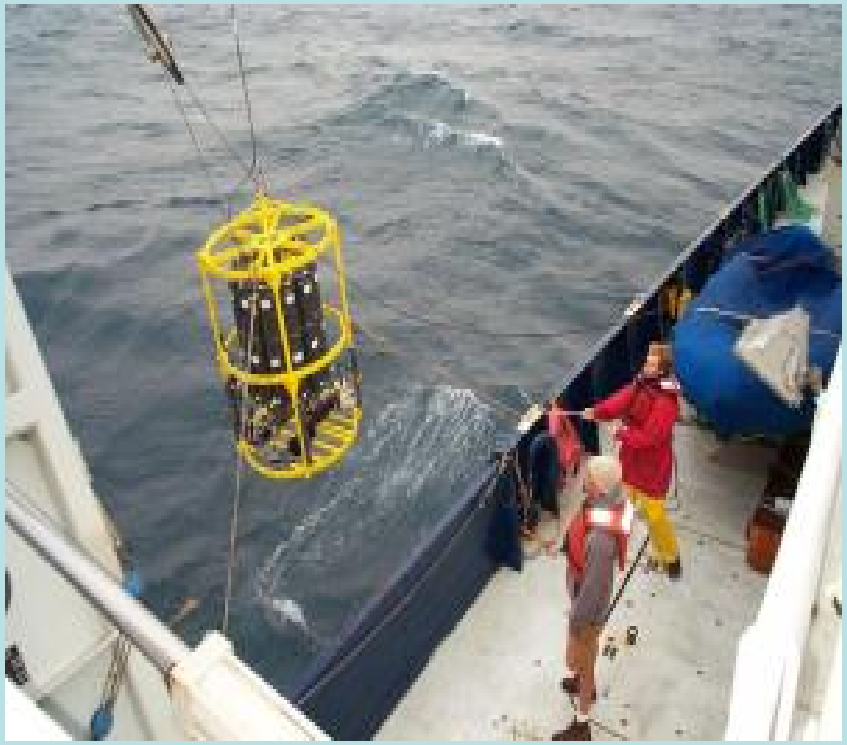
- **Initiative to standardize data collection and data archival across fleet**
- **Removes onus from operators to archive and provide data post-cruise**
- **Establishes a shoreside repository for all underway marine data, essentially creating an integrated global observing network**
- **Begins slowly with metadata and navigation but ultimately encompasses all underway data**
- **Policies for quality control, processing, and handling of proprietary data will be developed**



Tech Pool

- **In this climate of a shrinking academic fleet, a technical support group made up entirely of institution specific, full-time employees is not sustainable.**

- **The establishment of a pool of contract, sea-going technicians can provide greater flexibility, cost savings and ultimately better science support**



What the Tech Pool is NOT

- **An attempt to destroy institutional culture**
- **An attempt to alter the face of support on any vessel, i.e. the same technicians can continue to work on the same vessels**
- **An attempt to decrease the level of technical support either at sea or on the beach…to the contrary**

What the Tech Pool should be

- **An opportunity to be more flexible and discipline specific in cruise staffing**
- **An opportunity for technicians who are either not able or willing to be full time employees of an institution, to sail**
- **An opportunity to augment technical support groups with specialized technicians for single cruises**
- **An opportunity for cross-platform exposure and training for technicians**
- **A gradual transition from the paradigm of full-time, institution specific technical support to one of cruise specific staffing based on need**

What the Tech Pool MUST have

- **A positive incentive for the technicians**
- **Clearly defined pay and opportunity structure with benefits comparable to those at the institutions**
- **Buy-in from institutions which includes the contribution of technicians to the pool and the opportunity for pooled technicians to sail on their vessels.**

What does this mean?

- **A working group will be set up soon (Nov-Dec) to establish parameters such as pool management, contract duration, pay structure, sharing protocol and recruitment.**

- **The working group will be comprised of tech managers, technicians and scientists but will NOT be so big as to be ineffective, i.e. if the group is too big, nothing gets done but blah blah.**

- **<u>One</u> idea:**
  - Tech pool is managed by someone in the UNOLS office (new hire). This person is responsible for hiring, administration and scheduling of the pool in direct coordination with the Tech Managers
  - Pool Technicians become contractors to a single institution
  - Tech is paid a base rate. This is the rate assuming the tech work ashore (40hr/wk). The tech would make 1.7x that rate at sea.
  - Tech is paid only while working or traveling
  - Tech can make own contribution to benefits while not working
  - Tech can live anywhere

By most measures, the U.S. is in a decade-long decline in global technological competitiveness. The reasons are many and complex, but central among them is the country's retreat from long-term basic research in science and technology, coupled with a surge in R&D by countries such as China.


The End