July 11, 2003

PAUL E. VOGEL VICE PRESIDENT, NETWORK OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

GEORGE L. LOPEZ VICE PRESIDENT, SOUTHWEST AREA OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Audit Report – Highway Network Scheduling – Southwest Area

(Report Number TD-AR-03-010)

# **Background**

On July 5, 2002, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) announced an audit of highway network scheduling. The announcement responded to a request from the vice president, Network Operations Management. This report is one of a series of reports. It focuses on the Southwest Area (Project Number 02YG017TD003).



Highway contractor loading and unloading mail at the Little Rock, Arkansas, Processing and Distribution Center January 16, 2003.

# Objective, Scope, and Methodology

The objective of our audit was to evaluate the effectiveness of scheduled highway contract routes and to identify opportunities for cost savings.

The vice president, Network Operations Management, provided a list of plant-to-plant highway contract routes he wanted considered for elimination or consolidation. A total of 1,997 trips were operated under the 191 Southwest Area contracts. During our work we examined the list and identified nine contracts that were inactive, terminated, or replaced. We provided the Southwest Area transportation manager with a list of contracts we intended to audit, interviewed officials at headquarters and in the Southwest Area, reviewed relevant Postal Service policies and procedures, visited three plants, interviewed managers and employees, observed and photographed operations, analyzed data in the Postal Service "Transportation Information Management Evaluation System," evaluated mail volume and critical entry times for First-Class Mail and Priority Mail, and analyzed all 1,997 trips. We did not evaluate the reliability of the data obtained from the Transportation Information Management Evaluation System.

Work associated with the Southwest Area was conducted from October 2002 through July 2003 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards, and included such tests of internal controls, as were considered necessary under the circumstances. We discussed our findings with appropriate management officials, and included their comments, where appropriate.

# **Prior Audit Coverage**

Our audit report, <u>Highway Network Scheduling – Pacific Area</u> (Report Number TD-AR-02-003, dated September 24, 2002), identified 158 highway contract trips we believed could be eliminated, and consequently result in savings to the Pacific Area of about \$4.5 million. Management agreed with 124 trip terminations, but subsequently made certain substitutions they considered appropriate. Although local plant managers disagreed with 34 trips we identified, management agreed to reassess the trips, retain or eliminate trips as appropriate, and notify the OIG of all cancelled trips, as well as the resulting savings. We considered management's actions responsive to our recommendations. For other related prior audit coverage see Appendix A.

# **Audit Results**

# **Unnecessary Highway Contract Trips**

Our audit revealed the Southwest Area could save about \$6 million by terminating 249 unnecessary trips. The trips could be terminated because trip mail volume was low, and mail could be consolidated on other trips without negatively affecting service.

As indicated below, 9 of the 12 affected contracts will expire in June 2003. The other three contracts have 2 to 3 years remaining.

TRIP CATEGORY	AFFECTED CONTRACTS	NUMBER OF TRIPS	ANTICIPATED SAVINGS
Contracts expiring in June 2003	9	187	\$4,506,625
Contracts expiring in 2 to 3 years	_3	<u>62</u>	<u>\$1,482,457</u>
All Terminated Trips	12	249	\$5,989,082

Savings could be attained by not renewing trips identified as unnecessary on contracts scheduled to expire in June 2003, and by canceling unnecessary trips that are currently contracted to continue 2 to 3 years. The savings we identified included savings from nonrenewable trips, plus savings from trip cancellations net of cancellation fees totaling approximately \$165,742.

After we completed our analysis, we discussed the 249 trips with plant managers. The managers agreed 148 trips could be cancelled, but disagreed with our assessment of another 101 trips. The trip cancellation proposals are summarized in the following table:

#### TRIP CANCELLATION PROPOSALS

CANCELLATION CATEGORY	NUMBER OF TRIPS	APPENDIX	IDENTIFIED SAVINGS
Trips we identified during audit work with which plant managers agreed.	148	В	\$3,439,954
Trips we identified during audit work with which plant managers disagreed.	<u>101</u>	С	2,549,128
Total	249		\$5,989,082

The plant managers disagreed with the 101 proposals for various reasons—generally that eliminating the trips would reduce operational flexibility or affect service. We continue to believe the potential for trip cancellation exists without jeopardizing service or operational flexibility.

### Recommendation

We recommend the vice president, Southwest Area Operations:

1. Cancel the 148 trips, which plant managers agree are unnecessary.

#### **Management's Comments**

Management concurred with the intent of our recommendation to eliminate the 148 trips plant managers agree are unnecessary. They stated they had already eliminated 52 trips, and would eliminate 33 additional trips when the relevant contracts expired July 1, 2003. Regarding the remaining 63 trips, management explained that they were currently reviewing the trips; would make certain substitutions they felt appropriate; and would notify us of actions they had taken. Management's comments, in their entirety, are included in Appendix D of this report.

#### **Recommendation**

We recommend the vice president, Southwest Area Operations:

2. Reassess the 101 trips plant managers feel are necessary, cancel trips indicated by the reassessment as unnecessary, and document the reasons for retaining the other trips.

### **Management's Comments**

Management concurred with the intent of our recommendation to reassess the 101 trips plant managers feel are necessary. They stated they would reassess the trips, had already identified four trips for cancellation, would continue to evaluate the remaining trips, and would notify us of the actions they had taken.

# **Other Management Comments**

Southwest Area management stated that they appreciated the efforts of the OIG to optimize the transportation network, and noted their own efforts in that regard. Specifically, they cited more than \$16 million in savings or potential cost avoidances.

# **Evaluation of Management's Comments**

Management's comments are responsive to our recommendations. We consider the actions taken and planned sufficient to address the issues we identified. We did not audit or validate the savings or cost avoidances management noted in conjunction with their own initiatives, but we welcomed the opportunity to work with Southwest Area management to optimize networks, reduce cost, and add value to the Postal Service.

The OIG considers recommendations 1 and 2 significant and, therefore, requires OIG concurrence before closure. Consequently, the OIG requests written confirmation when corrective actions are completed. These recommendations should not be closed in the follow-up tracking system until the OIG provides written confirmation that the recommendations can be closed.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff during the audit. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Joe Oliva, director, Transportation and Delivery, at (703) 248-2100, or me at (703) 248-2300.

Mary W. Demory Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Core Operations

Attachment

cc: Patrick R. Donahoe Anthony M. Pajunas Susan M. Duchek

#### APPENDIX A. PRIOR AUDIT COVERAGE

Our audit report, <u>Highway Network Scheduling – Northeast Area</u> (Report Number TD-AR-03-002, dated November 25, 2002), identified 18 highway contract trips we thought could be eliminated, and consequently result in savings to the Northeast Area of about \$777,000. Management agreed with ten trip terminations, but subsequently made certain substitutions they considered appropriate. Although local plant managers disagreed with eight trips we identified, management agreed to reassess the trips, retain or eliminate trips as appropriate, and notify the OIG of all cancelled trips, as well as the resulting savings. We considered management's actions responsive to our recommendations.

Our audit report, <u>Highway Network Scheduling – Capital Metro Area</u> (Report Number TD-AR-03-007, dated March 28, 2003), identified 34 highway contract trips we thought could be eliminated, and consequently result in savings to the Capital Metro Area of about \$1.1 million. Plant managers agreed that 20 trips should be cancelled, but disagreed with our assessment of another 14 trips. We recommended that management cancel the 20 trips, which plant managers agree are unnecessary, and reassess the 14 trips plant managers feel are necessary.

Our audit report, <u>Highway Network Scheduling – New York Metro Area</u> (Report Number TD-AR-03-008, dated March 31, 2003), identified 32 highway contract trips we thought could be eliminated, and consequently result in savings to the New York Metro Area of about \$470,000. Plant managers agreed that 12 trips should be cancelled, but disagreed with our assessment of another 20 trips. We recommended that management cancel the 12 trips, which plant managers agree are unnecessary, and reassess the 20 trips plant managers feel are necessary.

	APPENDIX B. TRIPS IDENTIFIED DURING AUDIT WORK WITH WHICH PLANT MANAGERS AGREED							
Effective Date of Last Contract Change	Highway Contract Route	Trip Number	Origin/Destination	Contract Savings	Indemnity Fees <sup>1</sup>	Estimated Cost Savings		
7/1/01	790AD	9, 10, 11, and 12	Amarillo Processing and Distribution Facility to Amarillo Airport and return	\$ 124,251	\$ 0	\$ 124,251		
5/18/02	707AD	3, 4, 7, 8, 11, and 12	Baton Rouge Processing and Distribution Center to Baton Rouge Airport and return	232,839	0	232,839		
3/23/02	77860	1 and 2	Bryan, Texas Customer Service Facility to East Texas, Processing and Distribution Center and return	225,894	0	225,894		
9/8/01	783AD	1, 2, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, and 22	Corpus Christi Processing and Distribution Center to Corpus Christi Airport and return	200,316	0	200,316		
10/19/02	720CA	13, 14, 19, and 20	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to Little Rock Air Mail Center and return	141,036	14,118	126,918		
10/19/02	720CA	65 and 66	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to Forrest Park Station and return	40,858	4,090	36,768		
10/19/02	720CA	83 and 84	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to Little Rock Industrial Station and return	73,665	7,374	66,291		
10/19/02	720CA	95, 96, 103, and 104	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to Pleasant Ridge Station and return	140,361	14,050	126,311		
10/19/02	720CA	241 and 242	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to Veteran's Administration and return	31,625	3,166	28,459		
10/19/02	720CA	243 and 244	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to Hertiage Veterans Administration Facility and return	40,936	4,098	36,838		

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Highway contract routes reflecting \$0 indemnity fees expire in June 2003.

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# APPENDIX B. TRIPS IDENTIFIED DURING AUDIT WORK WITH WHICH PLANT MANAGERS AGREED

Effective Date of Last Contract Change	Highway Contract Route	Trip Number	Origin/Destination	Contract Savings	Indemnity Fees <sup>1</sup>	Estimated Cost Savings
10/19/02	720CA	247and 248	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to Big Mac Building and return	\$ 37,247	\$ 3,728	\$ 33,519
10/19/02	720CA	251 and 252	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to University of Arkansas Little Rock mailroom and return	47,788	4,784	43,004
10/19/02	720CA	253 and 254	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to Family Life and Distribution Office and return	55,519	5,557	49,962
10/19/02	720CA	255 and 256	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to ALLTEL 3 and return	52,532	5,258	47,274
10/19/02	720CA	257 and 258	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to Blue Cross Blue Shield and return	25,300	2,533	22,767
10/19/02	720CA	259 and 260	Lindsey Road Annex to ALLTEL 1 and return	139,515	13,965	125,550
10/19/02	720CA	261 and 262	Lindsey Road Annex to ALLTEL 2 and return	72,881	7,295	65,586
10/19/02	720CA	273 and 274	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to Commercial Mail and return	41,399	4,144	37,255
10/6/01	793AD	9 and 10	Lubbock Processing and Distribution Facility to Lubbock Airport and return	63,506	0	63,506
8/11/01	797CD	3, 4, 7, and 8	Midland Processing and Distribution Facility to Midland International Airport and return	17,622	2,521	15,101
1/5/02	730AA	107 and 108	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Britton Station and return	84,374	0	84,374
1/5/02	730AA	207 and 208	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Dell City Carrier Station and return	\$ 68,437	\$ 0	\$ 68,437

# APPENDIX B. TRIPS IDENTIFIED DURING AUDIT WORK WITH WHICH PLANT MANAGERS AGREED

Effective Date of Last Contract Change	Highway Contract Route	Trip Number	Origin/Destination	Contract Savings	Indemnity Fees <sup>1</sup>	Estimated Cost Savings
1/5/02	730AA	216	Dell City Carrier Station to Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center	34,218	0	34,218
1/5/02	730AA	407 and 408	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Midwest City Station and return	76,874	0	76,874
1/5/02	730AA	907 and 908	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Center City Station and return	10,872	0	10,872
1/5/02	730AA	1105 and 1106	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Farley Station and return	9,492	0	9,492
1/5/02	730AA	1205, 1212, 1207, and 1208	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Northwest Station and return	91,874	0	91,874
1/5/02	730AA	1405, 1406	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Southeast Station and return	42,187	0	42,187
1/5/02	730AA	2402	Southeast Station to Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center	21,094	0	21,094
1/5/02	730AA	1607, 1608 1611, and 1612	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Westside Station and return	62,490	0	62,490
1/5/02	730AA	2613-2616 and 2619-2622	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Oklahoma City Air Mail Facility and return	298,016	0	298,016
1/5/02	730AA	3401-3404 and 3407-3416	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Oklahoma City Air Mail Facility and return	\$ 109,894	\$ 0	\$ 109,894

148 Trips

Total

#### APPENDIX B. TRIPS IDENTIFIED DURING AUDIT WORK WITH WHICH PLANT MANAGERS AGREED Effective Date of Last Highway Estimated Contract Contract Contract Indemnity Cost Fees<sup>1</sup> Change Route **Trip Number** Origin/Destination Savings Savings 1805, 1806 and Oklahoma City Mail Processing Annex to 1/5/02 730AA 95,624 95,624 0 Oklahoma City Air Mail Facility and 3501-3508 return 1/5/02 730AA 1903, 1904 Oklahoma City Mail Processing Annex to 172,498 172,498 0 Village Station and return 1/5/02 730AA 2003, 2004 Oklahoma City Mail Processing Annex to 170,623 170,623 0 Hefner Station and return 1/5/02 730AA 2103, 2104 Oklahoma City Mail Processing Annex to 117,186 117,186 0 Bethany Station and return 11/7/01 710AD 27, 28, 33, 34, Shreveport Processing and Distribution 192,290 0 192,290 1-8, 11, 12, 21-Center to Integrated Airlines, 24, 31, 32, 35, Incorporated and return and 36 10/5/02 740BD Tulsa Processing and Distribution Center 81,678 8.176 73,502 15, 16, 17, and to Tulsa Air Mail Facility and return 18

\$3,544,811

\$104,857

\$3,439,954

# APPENDIX C. TRIPS IDENTIFIED DURING AUDIT WORK WITH WHICH PLANT MANAGERS DISAGREED

Effective Date of Last Contract Change	Highway Contract Route	Trip Number	Origin/Destination	Contract Savings	Indemnity Fees	Estimated Cost Savings
7/1/01	790AD	19, 20	Amarillo Processing and Distribution Facility to Amarillo Airport and return	\$ 51,338	\$ 0	\$ 51,338
9/8/01	783AD	11, 12	Corpus Christi Processing and Distribution Center to Corpus Christi Airport and return	34,198	0	34,198
10/19/02	720CA	15, 16	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to Little Rock Air Mail Center and return	70,518	7,059	63,459
10/19/02	720CA	51, 52	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to Hillcrest, Arkansas, Associate Office and return	52,337	5,239	47,098
10/19/02	720CA	85, 86	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to Industrial Station and return	73,665	7,374	66,291
10/19/02	720CA	131, 132	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to Westside Station and return	76,153	7,623	68,530
10/19/02	720CA	197, 198	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to Maumelle Station and return	74,481	7,456	67,025
10/19/02	720CA	237, 238	Little Rock Processing and Distribution Center to Sherwood Station and return	34,856	3,489	31,367
10/19/02	720CA	267, 268	Little Rock Air Mail Center to ALLTEL 2 and return	61,523	6,158	55,365
10/19/02	700L8	4, 5	Covington, Louisiana, Associate Office to Mandeville, Louisiana, Associate Office and return	35,030	0	35,030
7/13/02	77329	1, 2	North Houston Processing and Distribution Center to Baytown, Texas, Associate Office and return	91,601	0	91,601
1/5/02	730AA	201, 202, 211, and 212	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Dell City Carrier Station and return	22,135	0	22,135

# APPENDIX C. TRIPS IDENTIFIED DURING AUDIT WORK WITH WHICH PLANT MANAGERS DISAGREED

Effective Date of Last Contract Change	Highway Contract Route	Trip Number	Origin/Destination	Contract Savings	Indemnity Fees	Estimated Cost Savings
1/5/02	730AA	307, 304	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Hefner Station and return	\$ 136,873	\$ 0	\$ 136,873
1/5/02	730AA	511, 506	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Moore Station and return	95,624	0	95,624
1/5/02	730AA	605, 606	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Penn 89 Station and return	74,062	0	74,062
1/5/02	730AA	709, 706	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Village Station and return	105,936	0	105,936
1/5/02	730AA	807, 808	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Warr Acres Station and return	107,811	0	107,811
1/5/02	730AA	901, 902	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to State Capitol and return	42,187	0	42,187
1/5/02	730AA	903, 904	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Center City Station and return	13,125	0	13,125
1/5/02	730AA	1003, 1004	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Martin Luther King Junior Station and return	48,749	0	48,749
1/5/02	730AA	1005	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Eastside Carrier Station	12,656	0	12,656
1/5/02	730AA	1006	Eastside Carrier Station to Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center	20,192	0	20,192

# APPENDIX C. TRIPS IDENTIFIED DURING AUDIT WORK WITH WHICH PLANT MANAGERS DISAGREED

Effective Date of Last Contract Change	Highway Contract Route	Trip Number	Origin/Destination	Contract Savings	Indemnity Fees	Estimated Cost Savings
1/5/02	730AA	1103, 1112	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Stockyards Station and return	58,593	0	58,593
1/5/02	730AA	1505, 1506	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Southwest Station and return	53,437	0	53,437
1/5/02	730AA	1707, 1708	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to 39 <sup>th</sup> Street Station and return	67,499	0	67,499
1/5/02	730AA	2405, 2406 and 2407, 2408 or 2411, 2412	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Oklahoma City Central Markup Forwarding Unit and return	\$ 7,500	\$ 0	\$ 7,500
1/5/02	730AA	2625, 2626 and 2303, 2304	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Oklahoma City Air Mail Facility and return	214,976	0	214,976
1/5/02	730AA	4203, 4204 and 4207, 4208	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Standard B Annex and return	57,280	0	57,280
1/5/02	730AA	4301 or 4303	Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center to Standard B Annex	14,399	0	14,399
1/5/02	730AA	4304, 4305	Standard B Annex to Oklahoma City Mail Processing Annex and return	27,518	0	27,518
1/5/02	730AA	4401, 4402	Oklahoma City Mail Processing Annex to Standard B Annex and return	27,367	0	27,367
1/5/02	730AA	2415, 2416	Oklahoma City Mail Processing Annex to Oklahoma City Processing and Distribution Center and return	70,312	0	70,312

#### APPENDIX C. TRIPS IDENTIFIED DURING AUDIT WORK WITH WHICH PLANT MANAGERS DISAGREED Effective **Date of Last** Highway **Estimated** Contract Contract Contract Indemnity Cost Change Origin/Destination Route **Trip Number** Savings Fees Savings 4001-4004, 4007-Oklahoma City Mail Processing Annex to 1/5/02 730AA 500,610 500,610 0 4010, 4013, 4014 Standard B Annex and return 4017, 4018, 4021, 4022, 4025, 4026, 4047-4052 11/7/01 710AD **Shreveport Processing and Distribution** 10,768 10,768 37, 38 0 Center to Shreveport Airport and return 10/5/02 11, 12, 13, 14, 21, Tulsa Processing and Distribution Center \$ 164,704 \$16,487 \$ 148,217 740BD to Tulsa Air Mail Facility and return 22, 23, 24 **Total** 101 Trips \$ 2,610,013 \$60,885 \$2,549,128

#### APPENDIX D. MANAGEMENT'S COMMENTS

MANAGER, DISTRIBUTION NETWORKS SOUTHWEST AREA



May 6, 2003

B. WAYNE GOLESKI ASST. INSPECTOR GENERAL CORE OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Draft Audit Report – Highway Network Scheduling, Southwest Area Report Number TD-AR-03-Draft

This is in response to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) Draft Audit report (TD-AR-03-Draft), dated April 8, 2003.

We concur with the intent of your findings and recommendations.

# Recommendation 1. Cancel the 148 trips, which plant managers agree are unnecessary

Appendix B, Trips Identified During Audit Work With Which Plant Managers Agreed, of the report identified 148 trips for elimination. We have already eliminated 52 of the 148 trips identified. At renewal on July 1, 2003, we will be eliminating an additional 33 trips. We noted, based on your review, that a number of trips identified in recommendations one and two are under two contracts and have determined that these contracts require a comprehensive review. Therefore, we have renewed contract 730AA, which expires on June 30, 2003, for a short-term to facilitate a review of this contract. This review process is already underway and we anticipate it being completed by September 8, 2003. We are also conducting a review of contract 720CA in an effort to accomplish further consolidations/eliminations. This review should be finalized by August 1, 2003. Upon completion of our review, we will reassess the balance of the trips included in the recommendations, may make certain substitutions that may result from the review, and retain or eliminate trips as appropriate. We will notify you of the actions taken and provide supporting documentation by September 26, 2003.

Recommendation 2. Reassess the 101 trips plant managers feel are necessary, cancel trips indicated by the reassessment as necessary, and document the reasons for retaining the other trips.

Appendix C, Trips Identified During Audit Work With Which Plant Managers Disagreed, of the report recommended the elimination of 101 trips; however, Plant Managers are still in disagreement with most of the recommendations. A total of four (4) trips originally disputed have been changed to "Agreed". We will reassess the balance of the recommendations, retain or eliminate trips as appropriate, and notify you of the action we have taken.

PO Box 225428 DALLAS TX 75222-5428 214-819-8801 FAX: 214-819-8850

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We appreciate the efforts of the OIG to further optimize our transportation network.

Through our ongoing Breakthrough Productivity Initiative (BPI) and efficiency improvement efforts, the Southwest Area has also reduced highway transportation costs \$4,040,878 during FY 01 and \$5,751,321 during FY 02. We will continue this commitment thru the balance of FY 03 and on into FY 04 as we seek further optimization of our transportation network. In fact, actual savings totaling \$128,386 have already been achieved for FY 03.

Additionally, through our BPI-PVS process reviews, we have identified \$4.5 million in savings and cost avoidance opportunities for PVS sites in the Southwest Area.

And finally, the Southwest Area Inter-BMC highway transportation has also been reviewed through the BPI process, and, in contracts where the Dallas BMC is the Administrative Office, we have identified reductions in trips, mileage, and hours with resulting potential savings of approximately \$2.3 million.

If you require further documentation, contact Dwayne Lee, Traffic Management Specialist, at 214-819-8840.

Stephen F. Johnsen Manager, Distribution Networks

cc: Kim H. Stroud, (OIG, Dir., Audit Operations) George L. Lopez, Vice President, SW Area Stan McCord Anthony Pajunas

Paul Vogel