

United States Patent and Trademark Office CAREER SPOTLIGHT

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FORWARD
THINKING

Benefits/Feature: Time Off

As a federal government employee, you'll have a whole suite of great benefits available to you. One of the best benefits you'll find is a generous amount of time off. On top of 10 paid holidays each year, you'll also have 13 days of vacation leave and 13 days of sick leave per year. Your vacation leave time grows to 20 days after three years of service, and to 26 after 15 years of service.

Some employees can also take advantage of flexible scheduling. All USPTO work schedules are based on a 2-week pay period. This normally involves 8-hour workdays Monday through Friday, but you can choose a variety of schedules to better suit your lifestyle. For instance, you could work eight 9-hour days and one 8-hour day during a pay period in order to get a day off, or work four 10-hour days per week to get a day off every week. There is also a Flextime program that allows full-time employees to work their regular hours in less than ten full workdays. Speak to your supervisor to find out what kind of scheduling opportunities you can use to give yourself more days away from the office.

This year's holidays are:

- Tuesday, Jan 1: New Year's Day
- Monday, Jan 21: Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Monday, Feb 18: Washington's Birthday
- Monday, May 26: Memorial Day
- Friday, Jul 4: Independence Day
- Monday, Sep 1: Labor Day
- Monday, Oct 13: Columbus Day
- Tuesday, Nov 11: Veterans Day
- Thursday, Nov 27: Thanksgiving Day
- Thursday, Dec 25: Christmas Day

This month we recognized the accomplishments of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. January 15 would have been his 75th birthday, and we are reminded of the struggle that led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The law marked a turning point in the life of our country. On that day, our federal government accepted the duty of securing freedom and justice for every American. On Monday, January 21, 2008, we observed the national holiday in honor of Dr. King, and renewed our commitment to freedom, justice, service, and equality.

Living & Working in D.C.: Near-by Skiing

It's winter time, and that means that you could use some of your time off to head to the slopes. There are several great ski destinations that are just a short road trip from the D.C. area.

Pennsylvania's **Whitetail** resort is only 1 1/2 hours away. It features a 900-foot vertical drop and 19 trails, all but one of which are lit for night skiing. It's as easy to stop by for a daytrip as it is to spend a few days. If you're looking for a quick dash to the slopes, you should keep **Liberty** in mind. Also in Pennsylvania, it's only an hour away. Liberty has a 600-foot vertical drop and 16 trails, all with lights for night skiing. It's a favorite after-work getaway for locals who want to get a little skiing in under the stars.

<http://www.skiwhitetail.com/>

<http://www.skiliberty.com/lmr/index.aspx>

Maryland's **Wisp** resort, on Deep Creek Lake, is a beloved local getaway. It'll take a little longer to drive there—about 3 hours from D.C.—but it's worth the trip. Although it's not too far from our area, Garret County averages 100 inches of snow per year. The conditions at Wisp are fantastic, as is the area—family friendly and full of restaurants and other activities to keep you busy. Wisp now has 32 trails and a vertical drop of 700 feet. The new trails are wider and good for beginners.

<http://www.wispresort.com/wisp/index.aspx>

Another recipient of lots of lake effect snow is West Virginia's **Snowshoe Mountain Resort**. With challenging slopes and immaculate grooming, it's a skier's dream. It's the region's largest—resort with snow tubing, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, indoor and outdoor swimming facilities, a dozen restaurants and 57 trails.

<http://www.snowshoemtn.com/index.htm>

That's not nearly all. With so much mountainous terrain surrounding the D.C. area, there are a ton of places to explore under wintry conditions. Check out DCSki for more suggestions.

<http://www.dcski.com/>

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FROM PTO

FROM PTO: 2007 Year in Review

2007 was another successful year for the USPTO. We put a lot of energy into building a foundation for future success. Most notably, we entered a three-year partnership with the Ad Council to reach young people through a national ad campaign called, "Inspiring Invention." Through it we hope to encourage individual inventors and small and medium businesses to innovate and protect their IP. Look for our radio and TV commercials playing throughout this year with the message, "Anything's possible. Keep thinking."

It was a great year for us as an employer, too. Patents hired and trained another 1,215 new patent examiners. We also made the job itself more convenient, increasing the number of patent examiners who can work from home to more than 1,000—and giving them better electronic tools to increase the quality and efficiency of their work. We also deepened partnerships with industry to keep our patent examiners' knowledge on the cutting edge. These efforts helped us retain more patent examiners for a more informed, integrated staff.

Greater awareness and a well-armed team led us to the second consecutive year of 96.5 percent compliance. That's an extraordinary accomplishment, thanks to quality initiatives put in place in 2005. Mid-way quality reviews give patent examiners the chance to realize possible errors and learn from them before they make a final decision. This year we also rolled out our 2007-2012 Strategic Plans. We're looking forward to even greater improvements in 2008.

FAST FACTS

Historic PTO Moments in the Month of January

A lot of important moments in PTO history have happened in the first month of the year. From big patents and trademarks to movements that have affected the agency as a whole, here are a few highlights:

- Jan 2, 1975: The "U.S. Patent Office" was renamed the "U.S. Patent and Trademark Office."
- Jan 5, 1965: Burger King registered its trademark for "Home of the Whopper."
- Jan 11, 1955: The antibiotic tetracycline was patented by Lloyd Conover
- Jan 27, 1880: Patent #223,898 was granted to Thomas A. Edison, for "an electric lamp for giving light by incandescence."
- Jan 29, 1895: The advent of A/C power was heralded by the patenting of Charles Steinmetz' "system of distribution by alternating current."