

## Customer Service Report for Fiscal Year 2000

THE Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) continues to make quality customer service one of its highest priorities. We understand that reliable and consistent measures of economic activity are essential to intelligent decisionmaking by users of our data. In December 1999, our hard work and dedication were recognized when Secretary of Commerce William M. Daley named the development of the national income and product accounts (NIPAs) and its key component, gross domestic product, as the Department's "achievement of the century." A special article noting this achievement was published in the January 2000 issue of the *SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS*.

In order to learn more about your needs and to improve our programs, we have taken several steps in the past year to enhance communication with our customers.

- In May, the newly formed 13-member BEA Advisory Committee—comprising distinguished economists from universities, research groups, and private businesses—met for the first time. The members, the agenda, and the papers presented at the meeting are listed on our Web site <[www.bea.doc.gov](http://www.bea.doc.gov)>. The Committee, which will meet twice a year, advises BEA on a broad range of subjects that are associated with the ongoing development of the national economic accounts.
- In August, we undertook a customer satisfaction survey. Responses to this survey are being collected for the first time ever on our Web site, as well as by mail. The results of this survey will provide updated information on what our customers want, need, and expect from us.

*Program improvements.*—We strive to provide our customers with an accurate and up-to-date picture of the evolving U.S. economy. To meet this challenge, we've made several improvements in our programs.

- In October 1999, BEA released the initial results of the 11<sup>th</sup> comprehensive revision of the NIPAs. Major improvements that updated the accounts included the recognition of business and government expenditures for software as investment, a change in the treatment of government retirement plans, and the introduction of a better measure of the real value of unpriced bank services.
- In May 2000, BEA released the results of the comprehensive revision of State personal income for 1969–99, and in June, BEA released the results of the comprehensive revision of local area personal

income for 1969–98. These revisions incorporated the recent comprehensive NIPA revision, and the releases represented a significant speedup in the availability of regional estimates that are consistent with the national estimates.

- In May, BEA released the U.S. transportation satellite accounts for 1996, and in July, BEA released the U.S. travel and tourism satellite accounts for 1996 and 1997. These accounts extended the 1996 input-output accounts to provide a more comprehensive picture of the role of these activities in the U.S. economy.
- In June, BEA initiated a system in which selected companies can report information electronically, rather than in paper form, for its quarterly survey of U.S. direct investment abroad. BEA will soon extend this system to all reporters on this survey, and work has begun to extend it to other surveys.
- In June, BEA released improved estimates of gross product by industry for 1947–98 that incorporated the results of the comprehensive NIPA revision, newly available source data, and several methodological changes. The development of integrated estimates of gross output, intermediate inputs, and gross product originating for all industries—including depository institutions and business services—opens new possibilities for the analysis of structural change, industrial performance, and output per employee.
- In June, in the annual revision of the U.S. international transactions accounts, the estimates of investment income were revised to incorporate newly available data on portfolio investment abroad, and the estimates of the U.S. purchases of foreign securities were revised to reflect improvements in the accounting for large-scale foreign acquisitions of U.S. companies.

*Electronic data dissemination.*—We have continued to improve our Web site by introducing upgraded software and by providing additional information, such as research papers and analytical presentations by BEA staff. Check out our "What's new at BEA" page for information on newly available articles and statistics. Activity on our Web site—measured by the number of pages viewed and by the number of files downloaded—has increased 67 percent since last year.

We also updated two popular CD-ROM's.

- *State Personal Income, 1969–98* presents total and per capita personal income estimates and detailed estimates for the United States, regions, and States.

NOTE.—This report was prepared by Verna M. Learnard.

- *Regional Economic Information System (REIS), 1969–98* presents annual estimates of personal income, earnings, and employment for counties, metropolitan areas, States, and regions.

*Order-processing operation.*—To improve the processing of your orders for BEA products, we have upgraded our accounting software so that placing and tracking your orders is more efficient. (The BEA Order Desk can be reached at 1-800-704-0415; outside the United States, call 202-606-9666.) During this transition period, more than 70 percent of our customers continued to rate their experience with the Order Desk as good to excellent.

*Access to our staff.*—Our staff is always ready to assist you. Send your questions and comments by E-mail to [webmaster@bea.doc.gov](mailto:webmaster@bea.doc.gov), or talk to one of our specialists. “BEA’s Telephones Contacts for Data Users,” which is updated regularly, is available on our Web site or by mail from the Public Information Office. For customer assistance, contact

Public Information Office, BE-53  
Bureau of Economic Analysis  
Washington, DC 20230  
Telephone: 202-606-9900  
Fax: 202-606-5310  
TDD: 202-606-5335 