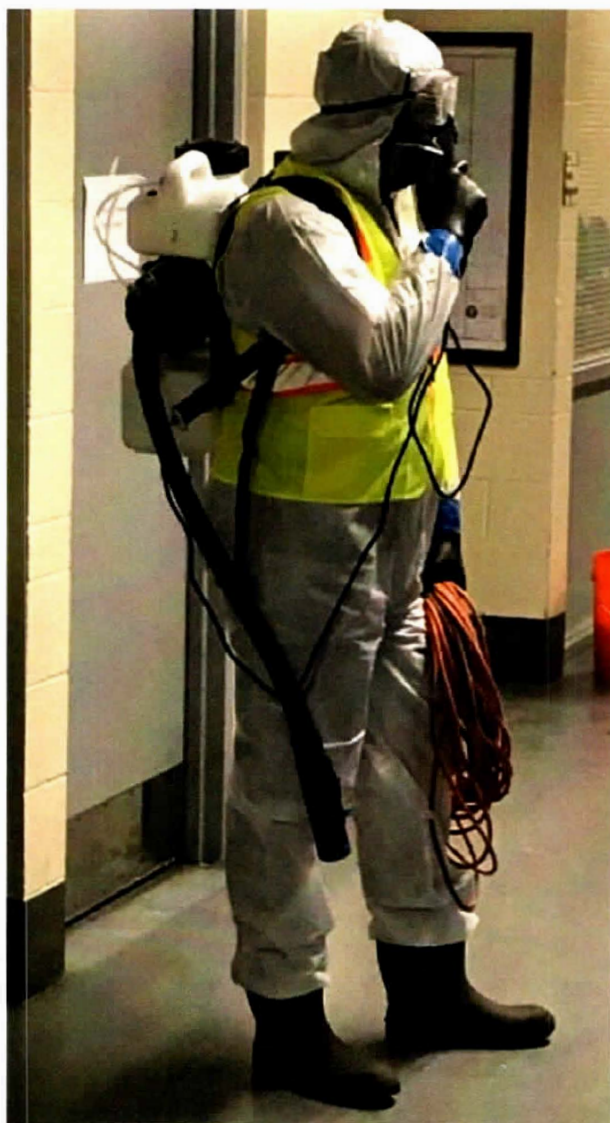




## Maximum Teamwork

### BEP balances employee safety and production requirements during COVID-19



ES Squared LLC prepares for deep cleaning at WCF.

The numbers are sobering. As of June 12, there were more than 7.5 million confirmed cases of the strain of Coronavirus known as COVID-19 worldwide, with 421,032 deaths, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The first U.S. case of the new virus was reported January 21 in an American citizen traveling from Wuhan, China, to his home in Washington state, according to the CDC.

“We had been monitoring the news for some time, and as soon as we heard about the U.S. case, we pulled out the BEP pandemic response plan,” said Deputy Director (Chief Administrative Officer) **Marty Greiner**. “We met January 30 and began communicating with Treasury and other bureaus about a response going forward.”

The Senior Executive

#### Related stories

**Page 5:** WCF Expansion Project on schedule.

**Page 12:** Police officers serve on the front line.

**Page 14:** Office chief makes face masks for employees.

Team (SET) began meeting to discuss what the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) could do to protect employees while maximizing the mission. And a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlining how to handle a confirmed positive test and defining how to sanitize after a confirmed positive test was prepared.

“This early preparation helped tremendously. The Office of External Relations drafted communications in the event of a confirmed positive, which meant we would be able to get the word

**See COVID-19 on Page 16**

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## COVID-19 from Page 1

out quickly,” said Chief, Office of Environment, Health and Safety Chief **Virginie Antoine-Pompey**. “The SOP was fine-tuned at least three times as the situation changed and new information became available.”

A COVID-19 Working Group made up of BEP cross-functional experts was also formed for increased communication and transparency regarding potential impacts and mitigations.

“In the beginning, we were meeting seven days a week,” Deputy Director Greiner said. “We were committed to communicating with the workforce, but there’s a fine line between keeping employees informed of a situation and creating a panic.”

On February 19, a BEP News e-bulletin was sent out about COVID-19 in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. First detected in December 2019, there were potentially more than 73,000 cases worldwide as of February 18, the e-bulletin said.

In the early months, China reported more cases than any other country. Its tally of new infections peaked in mid-February and

*“The silver lining in this whole thing was the outstanding teamwork between the Washington, DC Facility (DCF) and Western Currency Facility (WCF). We were working 14- to 16-hour days, seven days a week with no in-fighting – we all worked together because we knew our mission was so important.”*

– Deputy Director (Chief Operating Officer)  
Charlene Williams

approached zero by mid-March, although questions surround the accuracy of its data. As the disease waned in China, it began to surge through Europe, and by late March, more people had died from the virus in Italy and Spain than in China, according to an article in The Washington Post.

On March 11, WHO declared the COVID-19 a global pandemic.

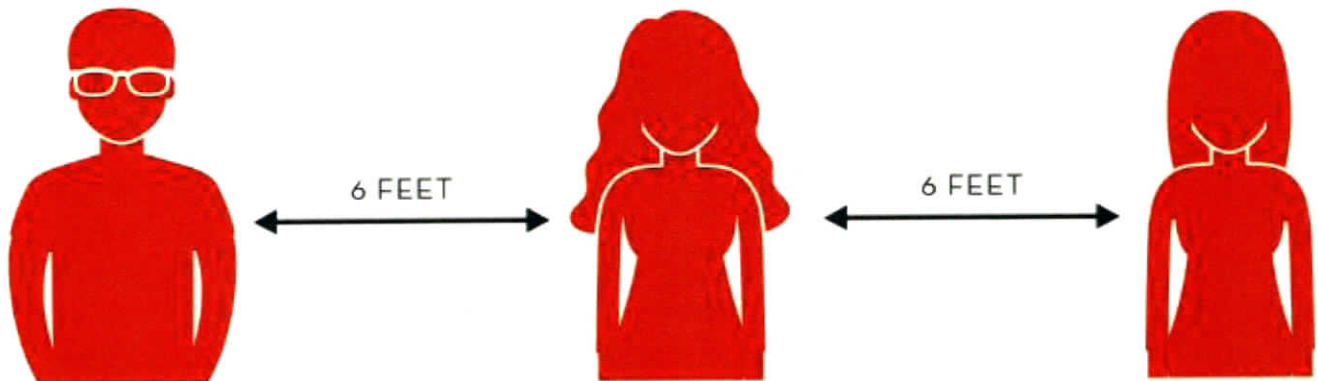
“This is the first global pandemic that most people have experienced and it has been a challenge dealing with different guidance from the CDC, the Department of the Treasury, and local authorities,” said Deputy Director (Chief Operating Officer) **Charlene Williams**. “In the beginning, the guidance was moving in so many directions it

was hard to keep up. There were daily conference calls including the weekends, and multiple discussions about staying open to serve the needs of the nation since we’re providing a worldwide product.

“We wondered how we’d get it all done,” she added. “And we worried about two things – how to balance the safety of the employees while still producing the nation’s and world’s currency.

“The silver lining in this whole thing was the outstanding teamwork between the Washington, DC Facility (DCF) and Western Currency Facility (WCF),” Deputy Director Williams said. “We were working 14- to 16-hour days, seven days a week with no in-fighting – we all worked together because we

## A new concept for BEP: Social distancing



Graphic courtesy of DC Health





AT LEFT: DCF Plate Printer Danny Dea-ro inspects the ink levels on press 902.  
ABOVE: DCF COPE Pressman Rodney Railey starts COPE press 23.

knew our mission was so important.”

Employees were kept informed of health and safety measures via BEP News e-bulletins, and frequent communication from BEP Director **Len Olijar**. Members of the SET also held regular meetings with union leadership and office chiefs.

Early actions included adding a link on InSite’s home page to keep employees informed about COVID-19, placing additional hand sanitizer stations in high-traffic areas, offering disinfectant supplies to offices, and reducing domestic and international travel.

The BEP News bulletins seemed to come every day: On March 12, it was announced BEP public tours and food services at both facilities were suspended. On March 13, employees were told to be prepared

to telework. On March 16, after the President declared a national state of emergency, BEP’s Office of Human Resources maximized telework options and encouraged all telework-eligible employees to telework until further notice.

“We worked many days because we knew what we had to do. The message was always let’s get together and execute our response plan,” Deputy Director Williams said. “The experience was challenging, but rewarding at the same time – to see everyone step up to the plate and do what needed to get done.”

On March 18, BEP employees learned about social distancing, which was outlined in a BEP News bulletin about preventive steps they should take at home and in the workplace.

Employees were instructed to stay at least 6 feet apart, to frequently wash their hands for at least 20 seconds, to not share protective gear, to wipe down their work stations, to use hand sanitizer as much as possible and, above all, to stay home if they were feeling sick.

“During all this time, we were looking at additional things we could do to improve both facilities in order to protect the safety and health of employees,” said Deputy Associate Director, Manufacturing (WCF) **Ron Voelker**. “Some of the measures were placing social distancing markers on the floors, changing the production schedule to allow employees to leave the section early to avoid close contact, and making sure cleaning supplies were at each press.”

“We coordinated with the Fort Worth, Texas, facility throughout this situation,” said Deputy Associate Director, Manufacturing (DCF) **David Hatch**. “There was a lot



of collaboration and brainstorming between the facilities, and reviewing common practices. Of course there are layout differences between the two facilities, but we worked well together and shared ideas constantly.”

“At both facilities, we had the Goodwill staff ramp up their cleaning, especially at key choke points and the turnstiles,” Voelker said. “I can’t tell you how valuable our Goodwill employees have been. They’re really part of the front-line team making sure it’s safe for everyone.”

Changes to the screening process conducted by police officers and the parking requirements at the DCF were announced March 20.

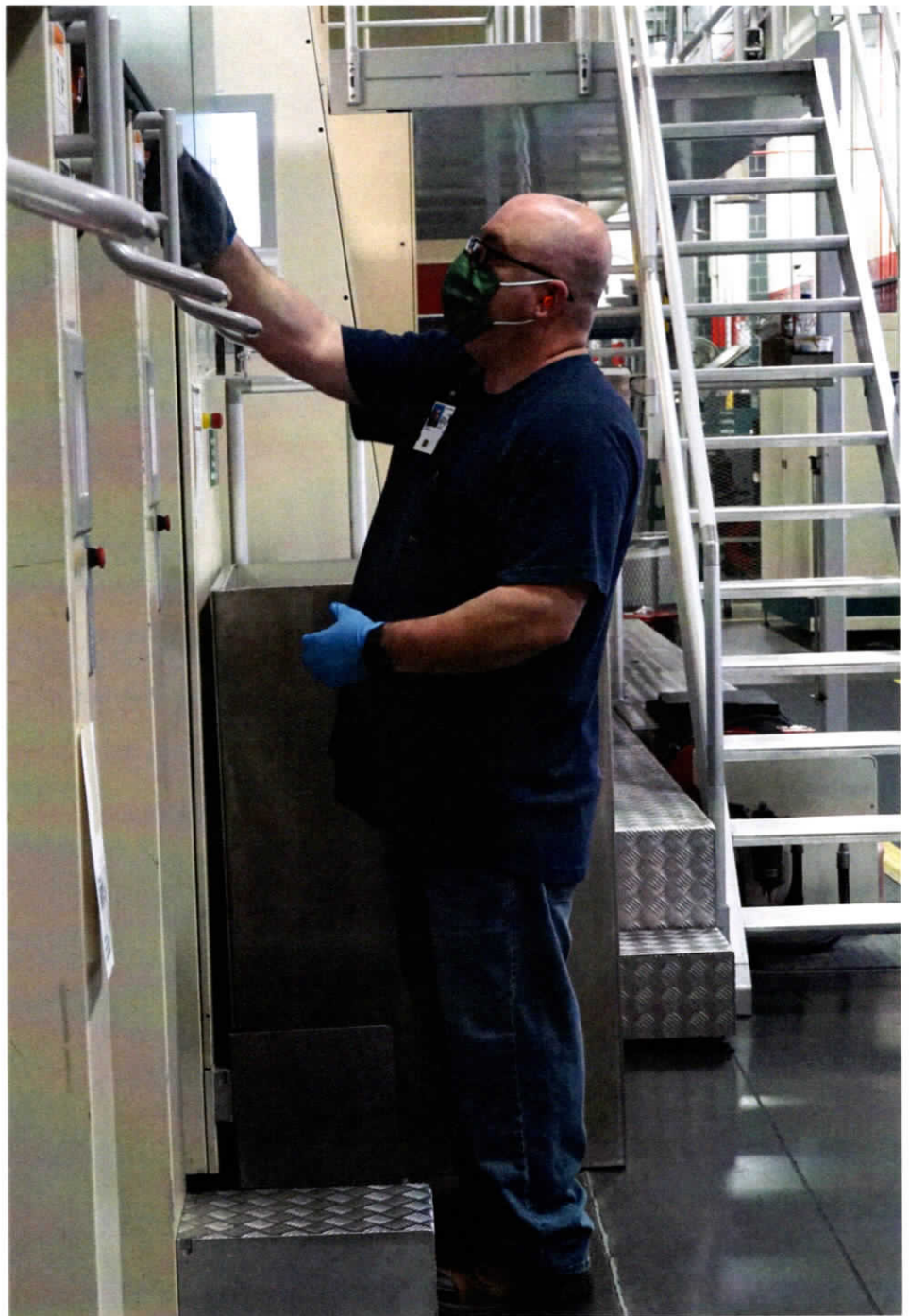
Shift change practices were also implemented. “Employees must now wait until just prior to their shift to enter the building,” Deputy Director Williams said.

When the social distancing measure was first introduced, supervisors would go to the entrance of the facility to ensure the proper space was left between each employee.

“After this social distancing guidance was accepted, we switched our focus to gathering spaces, especially the Atrium and break rooms,” Voelker said. “The tables and chairs were moved so employees had to keep the proper 6 feet of distance. We were confident that if the environment changed, habits would change.”

The DCF followed the same protocol with their Micro Markets and also staggered breaks in the break rooms, Hatch said. And managers constantly evaluated each change to see what was working and what was not working.

To assist with social distancing at



WCF Pressman Steven Breito Jr. cleans the Simultan press at the beginning of his shift.

entrances and exits, both facilities changed the flow in these areas.

At the DCF, the Annex entrance was closed and employees were allowed to enter only through the main building.

During peak arrival times at the WCF, the outbound lane at the main entrance became an inbound lane, which minimized close contact between employees.

## Continuous cleaning

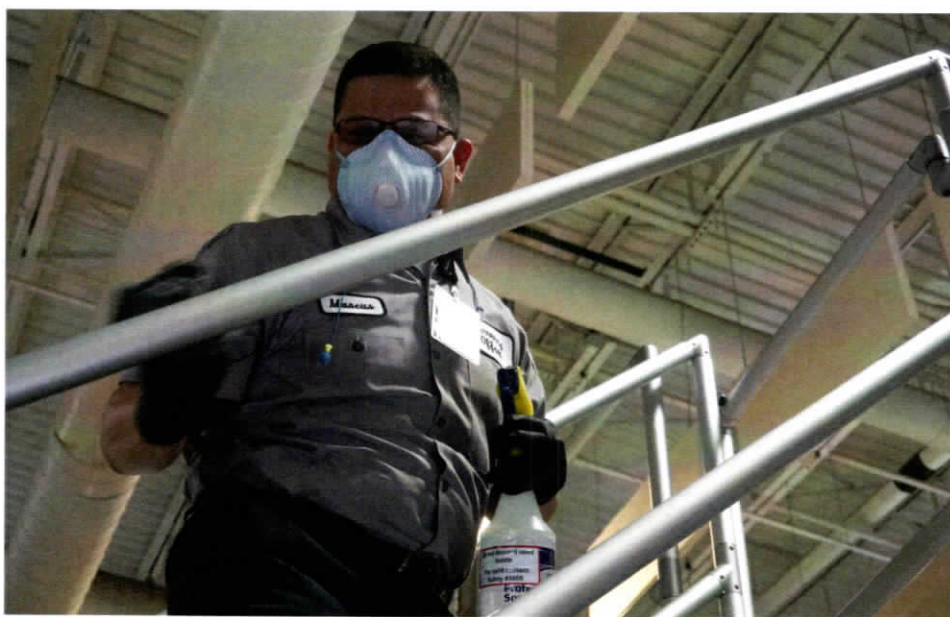
And the cleaning never stopped. Bulk cleaning agents in spray bottles were provided to production staff and they were required to wipe their areas down at the beginning of each shift.

“Safety really scrambled to find cleaning supplies,” Voelker said. “Once they identified a sanitizing spray that could be put in bottles,





WCF Plate Printer David Diefenbach cleans the press before his shift.



WCF Offset Pressman Marcus Mendez cleans his work area before he begins his shift.

the staff got in their cars and drove to various stores to buy the spray.

"We now have a good supply of inventory for disinfecting on the production floor and were able to ship two gallons to the DCF," he added. "The DCF folks had looked online for the product, but there was none within 100 miles of the plant."

"We realized early in the process how important cleaning would be

so we arranged for contractors to come in and do deep cleaning," Antoine-Pompey said. "Communication has been key – the turnaround time for full notification has been amazing."

Antoine-Pompey also managed the health unit and dealt with nurses, changed the policies and procedures for the health units, and adjusted staff schedules so they could maintain social distancing

and keep everyone safe.

Other BEP protective measures included canceling onsite training classes, closing the DCF gym, changing the screening process at exits, and using Skype and teleconferencing for meetings. The gym in Fort Worth was closed in 2019 because of the WCF Expansion Project.

"During this time, we were trying to do all the things we could that were best for the employees," Deputy Director Williams said. "At the WCF, we placed badge readers at the main gate so the police didn't have to handle the badges; both facilities limited the number of people who could come in to the facility; and, the police started having employees open their bags for visual inspection rather than an officer hand checking the bag."

### First confirmed cases

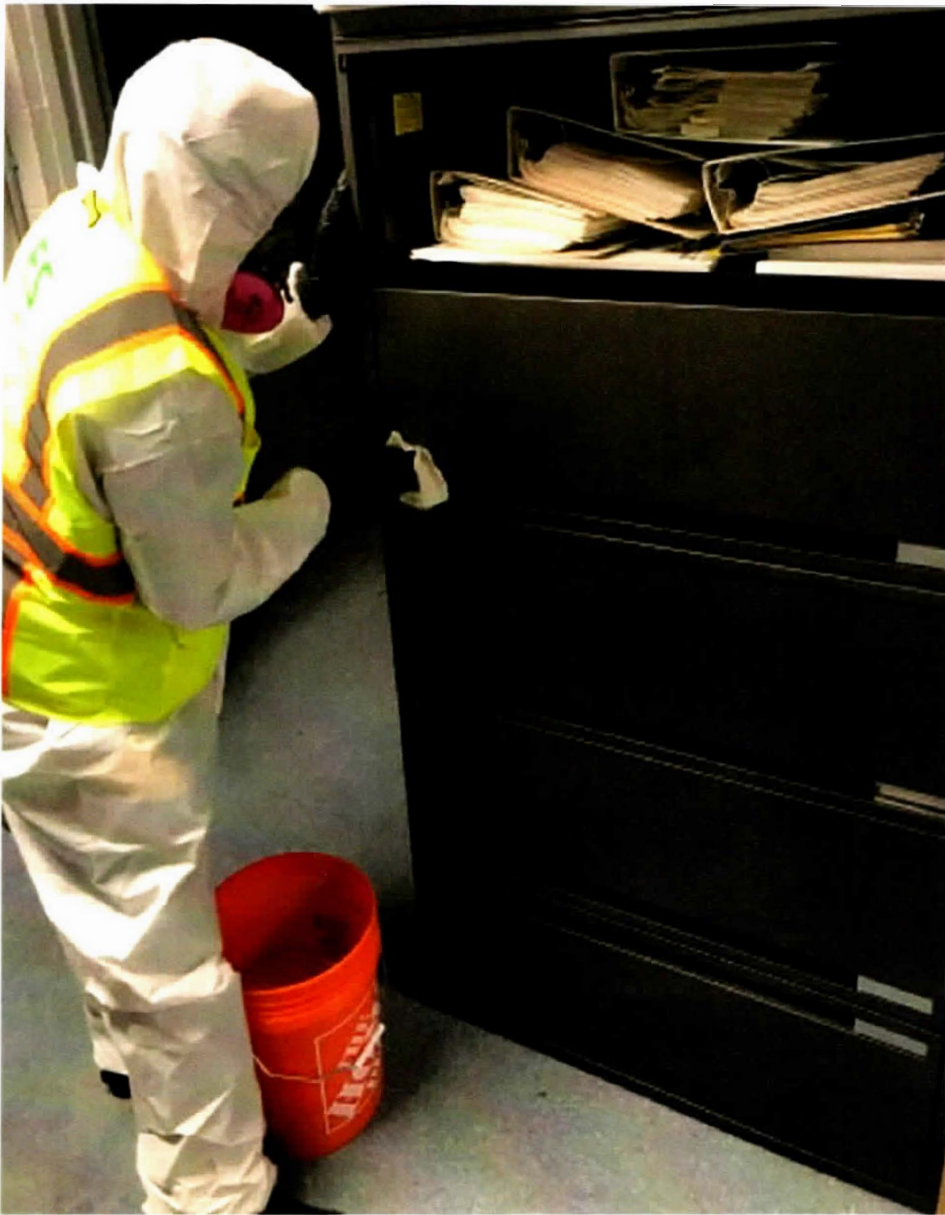
On March 28, the WCF closed after a contractor's confirmed case of the COVID-19 virus. The DCF closed the next day for the same reason.

And the protocols in the SOP were put in place – close the facilities for extra cleaning, continue to follow CDC guidelines, and issue internal communications to employees. The SOP was updated as new guidance was issued.

"After the first test came back positive, in an abundance of caution, we closed the facility for a deep cleaning," Deputy Director Williams said. "Those were some unsettling days. We were praying the person would be OK, while worrying about the person's family and co-workers who may have come in contact with that person."

"In the beginning, the Public





**AT LEFT: ES Squared wipes down a file cabinet during a deep cleaning at WCF. ABOVE: ES Squared sprays the area around the Post 15 main entrance.**

Health Service provided guidance on how to handle contacts for anyone who tested positive,” Deputy Director Greiner said. “As more cases developed, however, they were too overwhelmed to continue issuing that information so it fell to us to track and trace contact for anyone who tested positive at a BEP facility.

“Luckily, we have cameras throughout the facilities that we were able to use to track the person’s movements and see who came in contact with that person,” Greiner said. “We used that in-

formation to make notifications to BEP employees.”

The confirmed case also meant changes to the WCF work spaces.

“Once we had a confirmed positive result, we looked at the video to determine the locations where people were gathering. We saw that the Micro-Mart served as a magnet and decided it had to be closed,” Voelker said. “We also decided to minimize community food areas by limiting them to a coffee pot so employees didn’t linger in the area to eat snacks.”

Both facilities were closed for five

days for a deep cleaning after the positive test. Most telework-eligible employees had started working from home the week before the positive cases were confirmed, which decreased the number of employees who could have been exposed.

“I have to say the Acquisitions and Facilities did a fantastic job,” Voelker said. “They responded so quickly that less than 18 hours after the first positive test, the contractor was there to clean.”

Once employees were back in the building, Facilities added cleaning the security bins at the WCF entrance before every shift to their daily chores. This additional cleaning has meant the amount of touches per bin was cut in half, Voelker added.

On April 9, BEP decided to issue face masks and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) to employees and ran into a worldwide shortage.

“Everyone in the world was searching for supplies,” Deputy Di-





WCF Currency Processing Assistant Vicente Valencia packages notes that have gone through the Single Note Inspection process.



DCF Plate Printer Tom Pierson Jr. changes the ink drum in Section 9.

rector Williams said. “Luckily, we found enough so each employee could be issued one face mask.”

In May, the BEP acquired 5,000 cloth facial coverings for distribution to employees in both facilities.

“There are enough on hand to give each employee two, which would allow employees to wash one and wear one,” Antoine-Pompey said. “We ordered small/medium coverings initially, but some employees said those were a little tight around the ears.”

Subsequent orders contained a larger supply of medium/large coverings, she added.

As of June 5, the BEP had 17 confirmed cases of COVID-19.

## Currency order increase

While BEP employees were still adjusting to the first challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federal Reserve Board (Board) formally increased the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Yearly Currency Order (YCO) of 5.2 billion Federal Reserve notes to 6.2 billion notes – a 20 percent increase.

The new YCO required production to begin working overtime including 12-hour shifts and weekends. In addition to increased production, both facilities’ vault shipments ramped up.

“Even with the shutdowns, we continued the Federal Reserve vault shipments,”



Hatch said. “We developed different procedures to further ensure social distancing, and established guidelines on personal interaction, how paperwork would be signed and transferred, and how employees would load the trucks.”

“I have to say everyone involved with the shipping – police, Shipping and Receiving employees, vault personnel – did and are doing an outstanding job,” Voelker said. “The WCF shipped 1.4 billion notes in April, which required up to 27 shipments per day.”

DCF shipments were also high, Hatch said. “In the six weeks preceding April 24, we had 99 shipments with 101,000 bricks, which is almost double what we usually ship.”

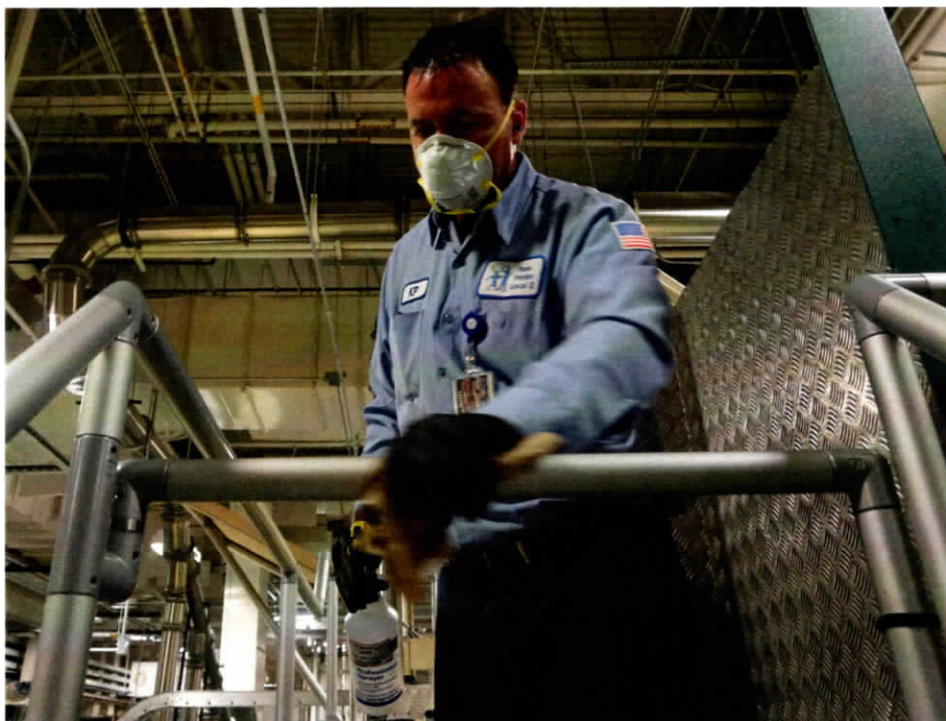
In April, the DCF shipped 116,560 bricks in 100 shipments and the WCF shipped 228,108 bricks in 316 shipments.

In May, the DCF shipped 69,760 bricks in 59 shipments and the WCF shipped 105,492 bricks in 203 shipments.

And it’s not a simple process, Voelker said. It involves preparing the product for shipment, completing a mountain of paperwork, and extra security. All this with zero tolerance for mistakes.

Director Olijar commented on the BEP shipping efforts in an April 20 message: This month, BEP shipped currency to all 28 Federal Reserve Banks (and branches) – the first time this has happened since Y2K preparations in 1999. In April alone, we expect to deliver to the Board nearly 27 percent of the planned total production for FY 2020 – an amazing accomplishment!

A message from the Director on April 23 carried news about possibly bringing the entire workforce



WCF Plate Printer Kevin Patton cleans his work area before beginning his shift.



WCF Intermediate Plate Printer Daniel Yoseph cleans his work area before his shift.

back to both facilities: On April 20, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released guidance for reopening federal facilities. And while returning to shared spaces at this time may be cause for anxiety, this step toward “normal” for BEP will be taken cautiously after much discussion and planning.

The Director also said in the message that “our focus on employee health and safety remains paramount and the timing for reopening our facilities will be based on what’s

appropriate given the specific needs of the BEP and its staff. While we look forward to returning to our collaborative office environments, the health, safety, and well-being of employees comes first.”

Now it’s about supporting employees, according to Deputy Director Greiner. “We’ve been maintaining operations while constantly checking for guidance and we will continue to do that to keep our employees safe,” she said. “Other agencies were closed com-



pletely, but we've been operating at some level throughout this crisis, so reopening fully won't be such a hardship for us."

And BEP will continue to look for ways to improve the process, Voelker said, but employees need to do their part. "Each employee is responsible for practicing social distancing, wearing their PPE and cleaning their work spaces," he said. "And employees can help by not bringing a loaded bag in through security or wearing clothes or shoes that set off the magnetometer because it slows everyone down."

Employees are naturally concerned and anxious, Hatch said, but they recognize the important job we have to do in meeting the global currency needs.

Another layer of protection aimed at preventing the spread of coronavirus was added in late May. In accordance with CDC guidance, the temperatures for all individuals entering the DCF and WCF are measured using noncontact thermometers.

In a May 5 email, Director Olijar praised the BEP efforts: "This year has challenged us and our nation. But as usual, BEP employees have

risen to the occasion. Thank you to those who have come in during this pandemic and those who have worked from home to help BEP meet the challenge. Your skill, work ethic, resiliency, and indomitable sense of commitment are the epitome of excellence and serve as a shining example to the nation. Once again, let me reiterate that BEP's highly specialized workforce – whether onsite or teleworking – is indispensable. It can never be said enough but, from me and the Senior Executive Team, thank you for your service to this nation!"

## Infectious Disease Prevention

Infectious diseases are disorders caused by organisms — such as bacteria, viruses, fungi or parasites. Many organisms live in and on our bodies. They're normally harmless or even helpful, but under certain conditions, some organisms may cause disease. There are numerous things that everyone can do to help prevent the spread of infectious disease. **Sources:** Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

### Good Hygiene

- Clean hands often. Consider scheduling regular hand washing notifications.
- Disinfect surfaces such as doorknobs, tables, desks, and handrails regularly.
- Stop shaking hands – use other noncontact methods of greeting.
- Cover mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Create habits and reminders to avoid touching the face.

### In The Workplace

- Wear face covering when social distancing is not possible.
- Adjust or postpone large meetings or gatherings.
- Use videoconferencing for meetings when possible.
- Avoid using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools.
- Assess the risks of business travel.

### Other Helpful Tips

- Prevent illness by avoiding being exposed.
- Maintain good housekeeping practices at home and work.
- Stay home when sick.
- Be prudent about food selection and preparation.
- Exercise caution when interacting with animals.
- Consider getting vaccinated (for example, hepatitis B).
- Stay up-to-date with current events so you know certain items, locations, foods, etc., to avoid.

## How to wash your hands properly

