

THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEE

FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO

Frozen



White House and Congress call for two-year freeze on federal pay; how the freeze will impact your bottom line. See pages 7-9



Inside this Issue

- New Organizing Plan Pays Off BigPages 5-6
- Forest Service Council Makes History...Pages 11-12
- Fight Back at Lobby Week 2011 Page 15



William R. Dougan

It seems lately when you watch the news on television, read a newspaper, listen to the radio, or peruse political blogs and websites, there will often be someone, or some group, bashing federal employees. The 2010 mid-term elections have brought out the worst in our elected officials, the political pundits, and the media with respect to their attacks on federal workers. Federal employees are viewed by many as easy targets on which to focus their misplaced anger regarding the economic recession and financial disarray this nation continues to experience.

Federal employees are often painted as “overpaid and underworked” and are offered up as an example of what is wrong in this country. While catchy phrases like “feds make twice as much as their private sector counterparts” may be effective in grabbing the attention of the media, such phrases have little foundation in reality. The truth is that civil servants represent some of the best of what our nation is, and should strive to become.

In 1969, I was a junior in high school. I decided I wanted to become a doctor, and began to seek out universities with good medical programs. I ended up being offered a full scholarship to the University of San Francisco Medical School as a pre-med student. But at some point in my senior year of high school, I found myself deciding that I wanted to do something different; I wanted to go to work for the federal government, working in the national forests for the U.S. Forest Service. So I turned down the free ride to USF and went to Humboldt State University to study forestry. Part of my decision was because of my love of the outdoors; but another part of that decision was a sense

of obligation that I had to give something back to my country. President Kennedy’s now famous speech, “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country,” hit home for many in my generation. We saw ourselves owing the country a debt for providing us the opportunities we had as we grew up in this great nation. We believed it was incumbent upon us to repay that debt in order to ensure that future generations could also be offered those opportunities. I, and many thousands like me, saw public service as a way to give back to my country. In my case, I think it is pretty clear that my decision to go to work for the government was not made for financial gain; I certainly stood to make a lot more money if I had stayed the course and become a physician.

I believe there are many motivators for why people choose a particular career; without question money is a major motivator when making choices about jobs or careers, but it is not the only motivator. Beyond the dollars, the notion of giving something back to society for the greater good helps to explain why being a civil servant is an honorable profession. Dedicated federal employees provide care for our veterans, preserve and manage our nation’s natural resources, and provide the myriad of services the taxpayers of this nation expect their government to provide. I am proud of the work each one of you does on a daily basis as a federal employee and as a member of this union. Know that the work you perform is honorable and meaningful work. Attempts to categorize it anything else are malicious, misguided, or misinformed. Federal workers are the backbone of this nation.

William R. Dougan

FROM THE DESK OF THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

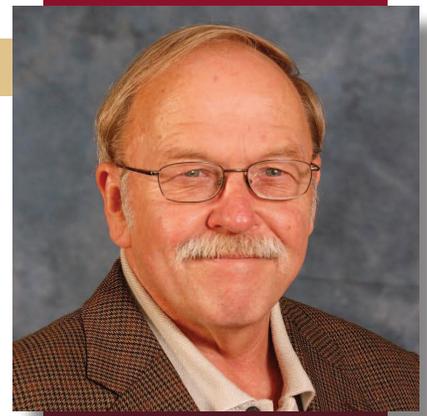
With a New Year and many new opportunities on the horizon, President Dougan, Finance Director Arnold, and I are working hard to put together a strong budget for fiscal year 2011 (as of this printing). Thanks to your support and an influx of new members, fiscal projections suggest that NFFE will be operating under a balanced budget once again. We have set our sights high this year and - pending approval by the National Executive Council - we are looking forward to building on last year's organizing and representational successes.

Our first priority in this year's budget discussions was organizing. As I've said time and time again, organizing new members is the lifeblood of our union; it is the force that empowers workers to make positive change for the federal workforce. I am proud to announce that your hard work in organizing has paid off. NFFE added nearly double the number of new members than it recruited in 2009. Building on this success, NFFE has elected to continue its \$100.00 per member incentive plan through the next budget year. With the extra funds in Local treasuries, Locals will continue to have the resources they need to recruit and represent their members effectively.

Our second priority this year is improving the representational assistance coming from the NFFE National Office. Membership gains over the past year have allowed NFFE to raise the bar for representational assistance in 2011. This will allow both National and Local unions to handle more arbitrations and FLSA suits which will benefit our members.

We are also looking to continue our strong presence in the political and media landscapes. With a slew of anti-federal worker politicians entering Congress in January, we anticipate many heated political battles surrounding your pay, benefits and job security. Rest assured that we will use all of the political, legislative and communications resources necessary to fight these proposals in the halls of Congress and on the pages of the national media.

Lastly, in light of the two-year freeze on your pay, President Dougan and I have decided to freeze our own salaries, in addition to those of the National Executive Council, effective immediately. Going forward, we will all have to make sacrifices, and it is important that your elected leaders are sharing equally in that sacrifice. Though the road ahead will be arduous for us all in 2011, know that your dues dollars will be put to work to stop the anticipated attacks on federal workers.



William D. Fenaughty

FROM THE DESK OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

I am happy to report that I just completed my first year at NFFE. One of my primary missions as your General Counsel is to ensure that NFFE's Councils and Locals negotiate strong labor agreements. Just as important in collective bargaining, however, is the ability to ensure that an agency is properly applying the labor agreement and any relevant laws and regulations to its employees. These laws and agreements are only as strong as our ability to ensure that they are enforced. We are strongly committed at the NFFE National Office to assisting Councils and Locals with enforcement.

One of the reasons I am excited about the new organizing efforts is that they will allow Locals to more quickly get the resources they need to enforce the laws and agreements. Along those lines, if every NFFE Local is aggressively building its

membership, NFFE National will have more resources to assist Councils and Locals. My goal in the upcoming year is to strengthen the ability of NFFE National to assist Locals in enforcing their contracts.

I am also using the Office of General Counsel to assist Locals in other ways. I am more than willing to work with advocates prior to going to arbitration to make sure they are fully prepared. This includes reviewing the grievance package, developing witness lists, and identifying exhibits. I also encourage Councils and Locals to have me review arbitration awards and to handle any post-arbitration filings with the Federal Labor Relations Authority. Employees will be best served when NFFE, at all of its levels, works together to make sure they are properly represented.



Stefan Sutich



Randy Erwin

FROM THE DESK OF THE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

In the fall, I predicted that attacks on federal workers' pay and benefits would come fast and furious in the new Congress this January. But it turns out that it didn't take that long - the attacks have already begun.

Shortly after the election this November, in which the Republican Party seized control of the House of Representatives, the Administration announced a

two-year pay freeze for federal employees. While NFFE and other federal worker advocates cried foul, Republican leaders in Congress said the pay freeze was not enough. They want the cuts to federal employees to go *much* deeper.

Sadly, this is just a small sample of what we have coming in 2011. There are many in Congress who do not understand the amazing work that federal

LEGISLATIVE

Long-Awaited Telework Bill Becomes Law

In November, Congress passed the 2010 Telework Enhancement Act, H.R. 1722, a bill that requires agencies to develop telework programs for eligible employees. The measure passed by a 254-152 vote and was sent to President Obama for his signature. Obama signed the bill into law on December 9th, thereby delivering a concrete telework policy for the federal workforce.

The legislation mandates that federal agencies determine which employees are eligible for telework and establish regulations under which they would be able to work remotely. To oversee the new program, each agency is required to appoint a telework managing officer. Furthermore, the legislation requires agencies to incorporate the new telework program into their continuity of operations plan for natural or security emergencies.

Implementation of the new policy is estimated to cost \$30 million over the next five years, a sum which will undoubtedly pay for itself over time. Just last winter, when a snowstorm blanketed the nation's capital in two feet of snow, telework-eligible employees saved the government an estimated \$30 million in productivity, while many of their co-workers were snowed-out of their offices. During that same period, the federal government lost more than \$350 million in productivity from workers who were unable to telework. According to GSA estimates, if implemented, the policy could save the federal government \$2.3 billion annually through increased productivity.

Sponsored by Reps. John Sarbanes (D-MD), Frank Wolf (R-VA), and Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA), the bill includes a number of cost and workplace efficiencies that would benefit both the federal workforce and the American taxpayer. With more employees working from home, roads would be less clogged, pollution lessened, and many employees would be better able to address the challenges of working-parenthood. Fiscally speaking, federal agencies would save on utilities, office space, parking arrangements, transit subsidies, and others costs associated with housing on-site employees.

"Good-government policies like telework help the government recruit and retain top talent, save money, and increase productivity," said NFFE National President William R. Dougan. "All around, this bill is a win-win for federal workers and taxpayers."



Participants of

employees do for this country. They have bought into this false narrative that federal workers are lazy, overpaid paper-pushers, when nothing could be further from the truth. They actually think that if they lay off hundreds of thousands of federal workers and slash the pay and benefits for those who remain, the federal government will be just fine. They just don't get it.

Brothers and sisters, we must start to go on the offensive to defend the noble work we do for the American people, and to counter the misinformation that is being spread to perpetuate the false stereotypes.

This cannot happen just from Washington, D.C. It needs to happen everywhere throughout the country. We need stories in your local paper about the great work

federal employees in your community are doing. We need stories about how important federal jobs are to the communities in which you live. It can only happen with your initiative to make it happen.

If we don't get out there and tell that side of the story, nobody will. We need to do it. We each need to take responsibility for doing it. And we can't wait another day.



the "New Beginnings" DoD labor-management conference meet in Los Angeles, CA.

A New Beginning for Defense Workforce

The Department of Defense (DoD) has exceeded its goal of transitioning the majority of National Security Personnel System (NSPS) workers back under existing pay systems. According to the NSPS Transition Team, about 172,000 of the 226,000 NSPS-covered workers have been reassigned. Approximately 75 percent of the transitioned employees have been moved under the General Schedule.

When Congress terminated the controversial personnel system in the 2010 Defense Authorization Act, they gave DoD until January of 2012 to completely dismantle the system and return all employees to existing pay systems. In April of this year, transition leader John H. James announced that the majority of workers were expected to be transitioned by the close of fiscal year 2010. At this point, it seems probable that the full transition deadline of January 1, 2012, will be met. This continued progress proves that the Office has kept its promise to put an end to the anti-worker, anti-union personnel system once and for all.

While DoD is getting close to finishing the transition out of NSPS, it is also working with NFFE and other unions representing Defense workers to rework performance management, hiring, and workplace incentives at the Department. DoD was given authority in the fiscal year 2010 Defense Authorization Act (the same bill that repealed NSPS) to make Department-wide changes in these three areas.

From September 20-23, about 200 representatives of federal unions, DoD, and the Office of Personnel Management met in Los Angeles, CA to brainstorm ideas. Called the "New Beginnings" conference, this gathering was the first significant labor-management conference at DoD since President Obama signed Executive Order 13522 in May of 2010 establishing labor-management forums throughout the federal government.

NFFE and the IAM were well represented at the conference, with 15 representatives from our union in attendance. Our representatives at the conference were able to share their experiences and the experiences of their Local members, giving all the DoD workers represented by NFFE and the IAM a real voice in the development of potential reforms.

"We were very pleased with the approach taken by DoD at this conference," said NFFE Legislative Director Randy Erwin, who was in attendance at the conference. "DoD was not pushing any ideas whatsoever. I believe it earned the Department a lot of trust from labor. It was a critical first step in the direction of *real* collaborative reform."

2010-2011 Organizing Strategic Plan Underway

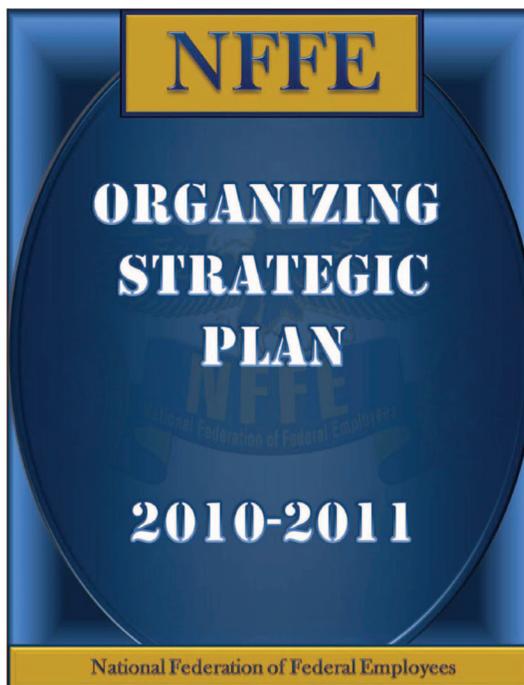
With attacks on federal employees coming from all sides, it is more important than ever to organize and build our membership. With every member we recruit, we become stronger and more able to serve and defend the rights of federal workers. In short, our density is our destiny.

In late September, the National Organizing Steering Committee came together at the William W. Winpisinger Education & Technology Center to review and update the 2009 Organizing Strategic Plan. The 2010-2011 plan builds upon the success of last year's plan and makes important changes regarding staff, Local reimbursements, and organizing techniques.

The new plan designates four staff members to focus specifically on organizing. Created were two new National Organizing Coordinator positions in addition to the transfer of two National Business Representatives to focus specifically on recruiting at existing Locals and organizing new units.

The Organizing Coordinators will be encouraging NFFE-IAM members at every level to be proactive in organizing. Participation across the board from members, officers, and Councils is crucial to our survival. These coordinators have been split into two regions: Cassie Kerner will cover most states west of the Mississippi and Brittany Paull will cover those to the east, plus Texas, Utah, and Idaho. If you, or members of your Local, have not already spoken with either one of them, expect them to contact you very soon. The goal of this new plan is to reach out to every Local, no matter how large or small.

This strategy is to obtain important information such as the number of bargaining unit employees, dues paying members, and updated lists of officers and stewards. Organizing is not just about signing up new members, although that is the ulti-



mate goal; it is about informing people about the true essence of unionism and why it is important to support the movement.

Organizing can be as simple as talking to the coworker next to you, or as in-depth as having a well-planned, thought out, organizing drive that focuses efforts toward bringing in new members over the course of a few days or even a week. With that being said, one of the most difficult obstacles many Locals face is a lack of time and resources to dedicate to organizing. To make recruiting more financially feasible, NFFE National will now reimburse Locals \$100 for each new member recruited. Simply send in a completed and signed 1187 form, and your Local will be reimbursed for your organizing expenses at the end of the month. With the extra cash on-hand, it will be easier to host events for current and potential members, purchase union apparel such as t-shirts or buttons, or perhaps even cover lost wages for a member taking the day off to organize. This will also allow Locals to build up their finances for representation work such as arbitrations and negotiations.

This plan lays the ground work for a great deal of organizing success in the coming months and years. The updated plan is not a detailed instruction manual, but does give some critical information about the resources and communication tools that are available to you.

“Our focus in this plan is to develop and sustain a culture of organizing success within NFFE,” said NFFE National President William R. Dougan. “Though we have made great strides in recent years, we will have to do much more to overcome the wave of federal retirements sure to come in the next five years. With this plan, we are doubling-down on our commitment to organizing success by taking an ‘all hands on deck’ approach to sustaining and growing our union. Together, we can and will build our great union.”

Significant Organizing Accomplishments in 2010

The fall of 2010 was a busy organizing period for many NFFE Locals. During what is normally a slow time of year for membership building, federal employees from all over the country continued to sign up and become dues-paying NFFE-IAM members.

While many of NFFE's newest members joined through informal, day-to-day organizing, a number of Locals also conducted formal organizing drives during the past quarter.

One of NFFE's biggest fall organizing drives took place from October 4-7 at Local 178, which was chosen as one of NFFE's three key recruiting targets for 2010. The Local represents almost 1,500 Department of Defense employees at



NFFE Local 178 and National Office representatives held an informational cookout during a recent organizing drive at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Aberdeen, MD.

Aberdeen Proving Ground in Northeast Maryland, and is currently adding even more employees through the Base Realignment and Consolidation (BRAC) process. The Local sponsored a number of activities around the facility throughout the week, and organizers were able to talk to hundreds of prospective members about the issues currently affecting employees and the benefits of becoming a NFFE-IAM member. A combination of Local volunteers, NFFE National Office staff, and officers assisted with the drive. Thanks to the hard work and cooperation of many dedicated unionists, Local 178 was able to greatly increase its visibility this fall. The Local signed up numerous new members during its recent drive and is now poised to add many more.

Also in October, NFFE National President William R. Dougan, along with Business Representative Gary Johanson and National Organizing Coordinator

Cassie Kerner, visited several of NFFE's Louisiana Locals and aided in recruiting drives at these facilities.

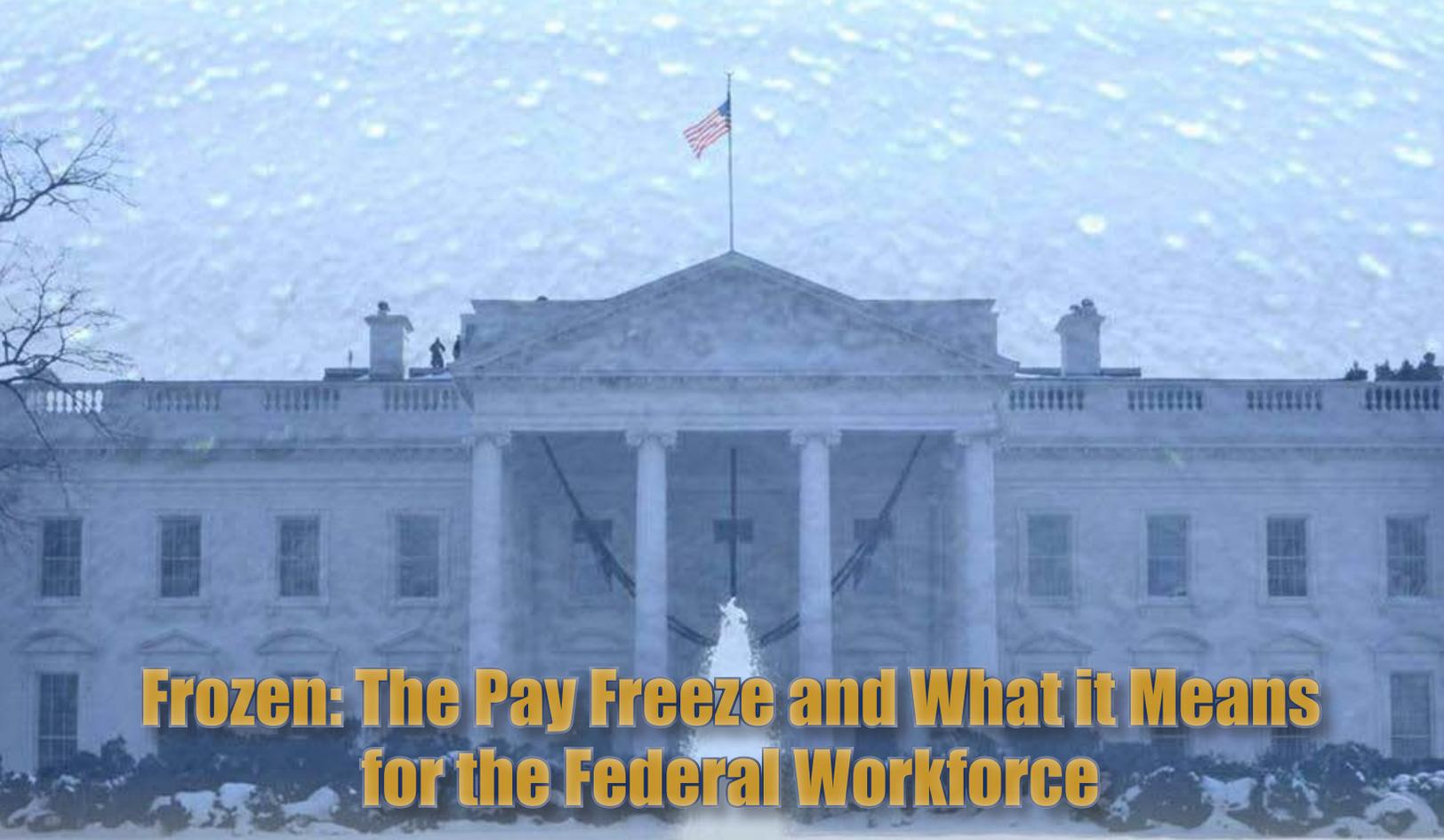
On October 18th, President Dougan spoke with a number of members at the New Orleans Passport Agency, emphasizing the importance of organizing and solidarity. This is one of several offices that is a part of NFFE Local 1998, which represents passport specialists across the United States. The following day, they visited the Veterans' Affairs Hospital in New Orleans. Local 1904, which represents employees at the hospital and its surrounding Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs), sponsored a lunch-and-learn event for its members and potential members. On October 20th, Dougan addressed employees during a lunchtime meeting at Local 1124, which represents Army Corps of Engineers employees. At all three events, members and bargaining unit employees alike turned

out in large numbers to meet President Dougan and hear about NFFE's efforts on Capitol Hill.

On the final day of their trip, Representative Johanson and Kerner visited many of the other CBOCs that are a part of the New Orleans Veterans' Affairs Hospital, talking to both members and potential members about our efforts on behalf of federal employees in the area.

It was a tremendously successful week and many new members were added at all three Locals as a result.

"I'd like to extend another thank you to the Local officers and volunteers at all of these NFFE Locals," said Dougan. "Your hard work and hospitality were appreciated, and your efforts paid off. I hope we have even more drives like these in 2011, as we all work together to broaden our union's organizing efforts."



Frozen: The Pay Freeze and What it Means for the Federal Workforce

With the federal budget deficit ballooning, and no end to that predicament in sight, NFFE has been anticipating unprecedented attacks on federal employees' pay and benefits. With the changes that occurred in the makeup of Congress on Election Day, many thought the real fights would kick-off in January. Sadly, it did not take that long for the federal workforce to endure its first blow.

On November 29th, the White House announced its proposal to freeze the pay of all civilian federal employees for two years. The freeze, which is likely to be accepted by Congress (at the time of print), will reduce annual cost of living adjustments to 0% for 2011 and 2012. Fortunately for federal employees, the freeze will not impact workers' step increases or bonuses, leaving some potential for professional advancement in the coming years. Unfortunately, this is where the silver lining ends.

This pay freeze proposal, if adopted by Congress, would significantly impact the bottom line of federal workers in both the short and long term. A two-year pay freeze will set back workers' bottom lines

right away, while diminishing their retirement annuities in the long-run. It will also diminish the government's ability to recruit and retain top talent at the federal agencies that protect our borders, care for our veterans, manage our cherished natural resources, support our armed forces abroad, and provide countless other essential services to the American people.

The short-term impact of this proposal is to reduce the pay of federal workers. Though this policy was packaged as a *pay freeze* it is in fact a *pay cut*. As a result of this pay freeze, the majority of federal employees will experience a net decrease in take-home pay. When accounting for inflation, soaring healthcare costs, and plummeting home values, federal employees' salaries will buy far less two years from now than they do today. In an economy where many federal workers' spouses and partners are losing their jobs, and many more are living paycheck to paycheck, two years of stagnant wages will make it far more difficult to make ends meet.

In the long-term, federal workers' retirement annuities will be smaller than they

would have been absent a freeze. When retirement annuities are calculated, two primary figures are used to arrive at an annuity amount: a worker's years of service, and his/her 'high three' salary. The 'high three' figure refers to the average amount a federal employee makes during their three highest paid years. For most federal workers, these three years come at the end of their career. The impact of a two-year federal pay freeze, then, is to reduce the high three average of federal employees looking to retire in the next few years. Even for those who are a long way from retirement, the legacy of this pay freeze is that it will lessen annuities when compared to what they could have been because salaries will be slightly lower throughout one's career.

Another long-term impact of the freeze is to diminish the federal government's ability to recruit and retain the best and brightest workers. With a two-year pay freeze in place, there is little incentive for highly-skilled workers to join or remain with the civil service. This will hurt both the quantity and quality of the government services that the American people count on.

Taken together, the immediate and future impact of this pay freeze will hurt federal employees, their families, and the American public they serve. We cannot accept this future for ourselves and for our country. We understand that sacrifices will have to be made to reduce our deficit, but we cannot be led to believe that we can balance our budget exclusively on the backs of federal employees. Everyone will have to sacrifice. National President Dougan has been in touch with the White House on the matter and NFFE has made its opposition to these cuts known on Capitol Hill.

Fiscal Commission Calls for Greater Cuts

As previously mentioned, the attacks on federal workers' pay and benefits do not stop with the Administration's proposed pay freeze. The President assembled a bipartisan group called the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, an advisory group of 18 current and future members of Congress tasked with identifying policies to reduce the federal budget deficit. On December 1st, just two days after the White House announced its intention to freeze federal pay, this group issued its highly anticipated report prescribing solutions to America's budget problems. Unfortunately for federal employees, the report recommends more problems than solutions.

Calling for steep cuts in the number, pay, health and retirement benefits of civil servants, the Commission is looking to make the federal workforce an example of government restraint. "Washington needs to learn to do more with less, using fewer resources to accomplish existing goals without risking a decline in essential government services," the report says. Though greater efficiencies in the operation of the federal government are indeed necessary, devastating the federal workforce in the name of greater efficiency is not the best way to meet that end.

First, the report recommends a three-year, across the board federal pay freeze impacting all civilian federal employees. As previously mentioned, this recommendation would have an extremely damaging impact on the federal workforce and their families.



National President Dougan and Legislative Director Randy Erwin met with then-House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) to discuss federal worker issues.

The Commission also recommends reducing the size of the federal workforce through attrition. The proposal calls for a 2-for-3 hiring plan, hiring two workers for every three who retire in an effort to reduce the overall workforce by 10 percent. Were this proposal to be implemented, over 200,000 federal jobs would be eliminated with little respect for the scope and complexity of agencies' missions.

"Reducing the federal workforce through an arbitrary 2-for-3 replacement policy will reduce the quality and quantity of government services and result in a logistical nightmare for federal agencies," said NFFE National President William R. Dougan. "Not only will it shortchange the American people on the vital services they receive from experienced federal workers every day, it may shift that work to contractors who have proven to be more expensive and operate with less transparency. In a nutshell, this proposal would diminish services, raise costs, and force the American taxpayer to foot the bill."

Another area the Commission targets in its report is federal health care and retirement benefits. The report calls for major reforms to the Federal Employee Health Benefits Plan (FEHBP), which would

transform the system into "a defined contribution premium support plan that offers federal employees a fixed subsidy that grows by no more than GDP plus 1 percent each year." What this recommendation really means is that federal employees would receive less and less assistance each year for health care expenses, regardless of how fast premiums increase. With FEHBP premium increases averaging 8.8% in 2010, and 7.2% for 2011, it is apparent that a "GDP-plus-1" system will quickly balloon real health care expenses for federal workers.

In terms of retirement benefits, the report recommends moving from a "high 3" annuity calculation to a "high 5" system, in addition to increasing employees' share of pension contributions. This "high 5" figure refers to the average pay earned over the five most highly paid years of government service. The net impact of this change would be a lower average salary figure when computing the value of annuities.

Taken together, cuts to the pay, size, and benefits of the federal workforce put forward by the Fiscal Commission would

continued on page 9

total in the billions. In addition to hurting current and former federal workers, these proposals would diminish the government's ability to provide vital services.

"What these proposals do is slash federal workers' pay and benefits today, and gut their retirement tomorrow," said Dougan. "Federal employees are already substantially underpaid compared to their counterparts doing the same jobs in the private sector. If we want to recruit the next generation of doctors, intelligence analysts, chemical engineers, and biologists, the government needs to do right by its employees. We will not stand for less."

What You Can Do

The battle lines have been drawn. As federal workers, we can either lay down on the tracks or we can fight back. We can let Congress decimate the federal workforce and take away everything that makes a federal job a good job, or we can fight back. We can let those who know nothing about the work we do steal our retirement, and our health care, and our children's college funds, or we can fight back. NFFE will not back down from these fights. Your union is going to fight with everything we have, but we need *you* involved in this fight. Here's what you can do:

- 1. Become a Member and Recruit New Members** - If you are not a dues-paying NFFE-IAM member, become one today; and if your coworkers aren't members, get them to join. We can't win these fights without the resources to do it. Either we are all in this together or we are going to get our clocks cleaned. We need you, and every coworker you know, to join up and become members. Those who don't pay their share and try to get something for nothing will cripple our effort to save your jobs if we allow them to do it. Either we are all in this together, or we are *all* in big trouble.
- 2. Form a Legislative Committee** - If your Local does not have one yet, now is the time to put one together. The only way to overcome the challenges we face is to make our voices heard. For more information on how to form a Local legislative

committee, contact Legislative Director Erwin at (202) 216-4451, or rerwin@nffe.org.

- 3. Educate the Public on the Work You Do** - This cannot happen just from Washington, DC. It needs to happen everywhere throughout the country. We need stories in your local paper about the great work federal employees in your community are doing. We need stories about how important federal government work is to the communities in which you live. It can only happen with your initiative to make it happen.
- 4. Contribute to MNPL** - It has never been so important to contribute to MNPL. This is the political arm of your union, and all contributions go to candidates that support federal employees and working families. The suggested contribution for NFFE-IAM members is just \$25 per year. This money adds up though, and it opens doors on Capitol Hill for your union to win these critical battles ahead. Please make your contribution today.

NFFE will not back down from the fights ahead. Please make sure that you and your coworkers are involved and engaged. Quite simply, we cannot do it without you.



NFFE Local 1 members raised funds for the Machinists Non-Partisan Political League at a cookout in Local President and NFFE National Vice President Patricia LaSala's back yard.

National President Dougan, National Secretary-Treasurer Fenaughty, Announce Pay Freeze for Nationally Elected Officers

In early December, NFFE National President William R. Dougan and National Secretary-Treasurer William D. Fenaughty announced that they would be freezing the salaries of all nationally elected union officers, effective immediately. The freeze will impact both Dougan and Fenaughty, along with NFFE's seven National Vice Presidents.

The announcement came in the wake of the White House's proposed two-year freeze on federal pay, a move the union has adamantly opposed since the outset. In their announcement to the membership, Dougan and Fenaughty reasoned that freezing their own pay in solidarity with the membership was the appropriate thing to do.

"This freeze will place a tremendous strain on the bottom line of many of our members, a reality that we here at NFFE National cannot and will not overlook," said Dougan and Fenaughty. "For this reason, we have issued an order to freeze the salaries of all nationally-elected officers... Going forward, we will all have to make sacrifices in our daily lives, and it is important that your elected leaders are sharing equally in that sacrifice."

With a two-year federal pay freeze coming, and a number of proposals impacting your pay, benefits, and job security on the way, solidarity will be key to NFFE's success as we navigate a new Congress and new attitude from the White House.

"It's going to be a rough road ahead," said Dougan, when interviewed for this story. "All along the way we must keep in mind that an injury to one of us is an injury to us all; that is the essence of unionism."



In solidarity with NFFE members, Dougan and Fenaughty froze their salaries, as well as those of NFFE NVP's.

President Obama Appoints Fenaughty to Federal Salary Council

Recently, President Barack Obama appointed NFFE National Secretary-Treasurer William D. Fenaughty to serve on the Federal Salary Council (FSC), an advisory body responsible for making recommendations on locality pay for workers under the General Schedule. A civil servant and union representative for nearly 35 years, Fenaughty brings a wealth of experience to the committee, which he intends to use for the benefit of the federal workforce.



"I am honored and proud to have been appointed to the FSC by President Obama as the NFFE labor representative," said Fenaughty. "I look forward to working with the other Council members on behalf of federal employees."

The FSC was established under the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990, which was signed into law by President George H.W. Bush in order to close the large pay gap between lower-paid federal workers and workers doing comparable work in the private sector. The committee is comprised of three labor relations experts and six federal union representatives, each appointed by the President. The advisory group is tasked with providing recommendations on the locality pay program, the salary surveys (conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics) used to determine locality pay, and the process by which salary surveys are conducted.



NFFE President Dougan (right), FSC President Ron Thatcher, (center left) and FSC Legislative Chair Mark Davis (left) meet with OPM Director John Berry (center right) following the historic announcement.

NFFE Forest Service Council Negotiates Historic Contract Provision Granting Domestic Partner Benefits to Forest Service Workers

At their annual stewards training in Reno, NV, NFFE's Forest Service Council proudly announced the negotiation of a new benefit extending Family and Medical Leave Act-like (FMLA) entitlements to USFS employees living in domestic partnerships. Negotiated in its recent collective bargaining agreement (CBA), the provisions allow covered federal workers to take leave to care for partners with serious health conditions. Covered employees may also take up to three months of unpaid leave and/or annual leave to care for a newly born or adopted child.

"This is a big step forward for the federal workforce," said NFFE National President Dougan. "Now, Forest Service employees living in domestic partnerships will have the right to care for their loved ones in times of need. This is an example that we hope other agencies will follow."

Effective October 25th, the new contractual provisions put leave entitlements parallel to that of the FMLA in place for USFS

workers with domestic partners. Though the provisions are modeled after entitlements found within the FMLA, it does not replace or alter the statutory framework of the law. FMLA provides leave entitlements that allow married federal workers to meet family challenges, such as the birth or placement of a new child in the family or a serious health condition of a spouse. The new CBA extends similar leave entitlements to USFS workers with domestic partners.

Since President Obama took office in January of 2009, the Administration has made a number of key policy changes regarding domestic partnership issues. President Obama's June 17, 2009 memo to federal agencies, titled "Federal Benefits and Non-Discrimination," laid out a policy objective of extending to same-sex domestic partners benefits equivalent to those available to married employees, to the extent it could be achieved consistent with federal law. On June 14, 2010, the Administration issued a new rule clarifying that domestic partners were covered

family members for purposes of sick leave usage.

"It was the leadership shown by President Obama and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Director Berry that made this accomplishment possible," said negotiations team member Mark Davis, who drafted the provisions. "It took the union to secure these benefits, but it was their statement of policy and definition for 'domestic partner' that opened the door."

"We are proud to have negotiated this important benefit for our bargaining unit members and their families," said NFFE-FSC President Ron Thatcher, noting that this family-friendly benefit will have no cost to the government. "This just goes to show how much workers can achieve when they do not allow themselves to be artificially separated by their differences, but rather stand together in solidarity. Now that NFFE-FSC and the USFS have shown the way, we hope that other agencies will implement policy to extend the same benefits to all federal employees."

NFFE Forest Service Council, Management Representatives, Gather for Union Training in Reno, Nevada

In late October, Local 1771, Region 5, and the NFFE Forest Service Council hosted the 16th annual Union Officers and Stewards Training in Reno, NV. Council and Local officers, members, and National Office staff from throughout the country convened to collaborate on labor-management issues. As this event marked the first time in several years their members, as well as management, assembled together to confront the complex challenges facing unions today, NFFE President William R. Dougan and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Director John Berry used the opportunity to unveil some exciting additions to the union agenda for the upcoming year.

On Tuesday, October 26th, Director Berry opened his remarks by articulating the importance of building relationships:

“You’re here today because you know that relationships are the key,” said Berry. “That building relationships builds trust. And that trust leads to a better work environment, improved morale, improved productivity, and ultimately, improved service to the American people.”

Wednesday’s labor-management symposium was open to management officials, and many took the opportunity to attend. A number of top-ranking administration officials discussed the role of labor-management partnerships. In the morning, Director Berry and Allison Beck, Deputy Director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, discussed Executive Order 13522 and the goals of labor-management forums. After lunch, Robin Bailey, Director of Human Resource Management for the Forest Service addressed the challenges of the Albuquerque Service Center and continuing efforts to address these concerns. Robin Heard, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Administration at the USDA, spoke about Secretary Tom Vilsack’s commitment to furthering collaborative labor relations. FLRA General Counsel Julia Clarke discussed enhancing effective and cooperative federal sector labor-management relations. Also, Dr. Merrick Masters of Wayne State University discussed engaging federal employees through their union representatives to improve agency performance.

The afternoon concluded with panel discussions on labor-management forums. In addition to the officials cited above, the panel also included Justin Johnson, Deputy Chief of Staff at OPM, who spoke about efforts being made at OPM with its workforce, as well as the guidance OPM has put out in attempting to foster collaborative labor relations across the government.

“The presence of so many high-level officials demonstrates the commitment of the Obama Administration to the concept of labor and management working together to create a better and more efficient workplace to better serve the American people,” said Ron Thatcher, NFFE-FSC President. “For our part, we will always be ready to work collaboratively with management to achieve this noble goal.”

On Thursday, the program opened with NFFE’s General Counsel Stefan Sutich, who addressed the ways that NFFE National is supporting its Councils and Locals in effectively representing employees and provided updates on recent FLRA decisions. Tony Cardillo, of the Office of Special Counsel, trained the attendees on the role of OSC in investigating Prohibited Personnel Practices.

Later in the afternoon, officers and stewards were trained on the new Master Agreement between NFFE and the Forest Service, which came into effect on October 25th. Thatcher credited the sentiments of collective organization as the impetus which propelled the Master Agreement to victory. His message was applauded by OPM Director John Berry and all of the Forest Service Council members who attended the conference.

“Through this agreement, NFFE and the Forest Service have set a model for what a partnership forum can accomplish,” said Berry. “You’ve taken the President’s Executive Order on Labor-Management as the starting gun, and galloped off to the races. It’s thrilling for me as the Director of OPM to see a conference like this one where unions, managers, and senior leaders come together to develop collaborative, productive relationships.”



Members of the NFFE Forest Service Council and agency management gathered in Reno, NV for its annual stewards training.

NFFE Takes Home Nine Awards in 2010 IAM Communications Contest

2011 Communications Classes Announced for Winpisinger Center

This October, the IAM announced the winners of its annual Newsletter and Website Contest, a competition that honors excellence in both print and digital labor journalism. Out of a field of hundreds of Locals and Districts, one name appeared time and time again: NFFE.

All together, NFFE Locals and the National Office won a combined nine awards spanning across five separate categories, surpassing last year's record of seven. The National Office took home five awards, and NFFE Locals 1998 and 2109 each won two.

"This is a proud day for our union," said NFFE National Communications Director Cory Bythrow. "These awards are just one example of all of the great work our members, officers, and staff have done with their communications this past year."

In the Newsletter category, NFFE National's quarterly newsletter, the *Federal Employee*, was awarded First place in both General Excellence and Best Layout & Design. *The Federal Employee* also won an Honorable Mention in Best Feature for its story "Remembering Rick Brown." In addition, NFFE Local 1998 garnered two awards for its publication, *One Voice, Union Strong*, taking home Second place for Best Layout & Design and an Honorable Mention for Best Feature.

In the Website category, NFFE's National website, www.nffe.org, took home First place in Best Layout & Design in addition to placing Second in General Excellence. NFFE Local 2109 made their first appearance in the Newsletter and Website Contest this year; their website, www.nffe.org/local2109, won Second place for General Excellence as well as Third place in Best Layout & Design.

"I'd like to congratulate all of our winners in this year's contest," said Bythrow. "Now let's go ahead and try to make it ten awards next year!"

IAM Announces 2011 Communications Classes

Recently, the IAM officially announced a number of exciting communications trainings for union members. Hosted at the William W. Winpisinger Center Education & Technology Center in Hollywood, Maryland, the IAM will host five separate trainings for several hundred NFFE-IAM members throughout the new year.

The classes will cover diverse subjects such as basic newsletter and website development, advanced website development, and how to become an effective Local communicator. All NFFE officers and stewards are encouraged to participate. For more information, contact your Local President, or Frank Carelli, Director of the IAM Government Employees Department at (301) 967-4500 or fcarelli@iamaw.org.



Issue # 18
March 2010



Local 1998
PO Box 2221
Seattle, WA 98111
Website
www.nffe1998.org

One Voice, Union Strong

Local 1998 of the National Federation of Federal Employees, IAMAW, AFL-CIO
Representing the employees of Passport Services, a division of the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs, since Oct. 19, 1981

Workplace issues, proposals discussed at national UMC meeting

By Local 1998 ST Jennifer Giles

From February 23-25 the National Union-Management Committee (NUMC) met at the Seattle Passport Agency for the combined 2010-2011 meeting. In attendance for the Union were Local 1998 nationwide officers Colin Wall, Rob Arnold, Jennifer Giles and Sue Lagle as well as CPC Senator Steward Boyd Hinton. Passport Services Director Doree Flaherty, Operations Officers Steve Rojas & Marc Saint-Victor, DOW Labor-Management Liaison Steve Pihon, and Seattle Passport Agency Director Teresa Bohone attended for Management.

local Union reps and bargaining unit employees (BUE). Some of these issues included training, instructions, promotion/evaluations, early dismissal (see page 4), awards, and anti-discrimination. The Parties bargained over TIME/PTERS monitoring, transfer selection methods and ergonomics. Due to the short time frame most bargaining could not be completed. However the Parties did sign an Ergonomic Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for Management to provide equipment when requested by BUE's. To view the MOA, please visit our website.



ST Jennifer Giles signing the Ergonomic MOA

Although consensus was not reached on every issue, in many cases Management agreed with the Union that changes need to be made for the wellbeing of BUE's and Passport Services. The Parties came out of the talks with many ideas to discuss further on March 31, 2010.

Miami Passport Agency helps evacuate American citizens from Haiti

By Local 1998 Steward Lisa Zerkow

After the devastating earthquake that killed thousands in Haiti, the Miami Passport Agency stepped up to the plate to help. The outreach began when a group of employees went to a predominantly Haitian neighborhood in Miami called Little Haiti. We passed out flyers with information to help individuals who were trying to locate family members in Haiti.

Great American citizens in Honduras, Miami, and Orlando. Other employees, such as myself, were fortunate enough to fly to Haiti in shifts from Homestead Air Force Base to assist in bringing American citizens back to the United States. While there we helped create flight manifests for the military, checked citizenship evidence and helped evacuees board the flights. Sounds simple, yet it was anything but.



ST Lisa Zerkow in a C-130

and fares, and the evacuees were justifiably exhausted. The military pilots would arrive and advise us of the number of passengers they could board, and then we would check citizenship evidence and create a flight manifest. Once the manifest was created, the selected passengers were moved onto a waiting tail end boarding. Then the next pilot would arrive and we would do it all over again. In order to keep stowaways off the flights, and to help passengers that were exhausted, we also helped carry three children and bags onto the plane.



2011 Communications Class Schedule:

- Basic Newsletter Development**
➤ March 20-25, 2011
- Basic Web Development**
➤ May 1-6, 2011
- Communicator's Class**
➤ October 9-14, 2011
- Basic Web Development**
➤ October 30-November 4, 2011
- Advanced Web Development**
➤ November 13-18, 2011

On the Road with John Griffin

Appointed as a National Business Representative in 2002, John Griffin has made NFFE his home by squarely confronting some of labor's most challenging issues. With his signature humor and collaborative approach, he stands ready to help lead our union into exciting, uncharted territory. As a Business Representative/Organizer, Griffin draws upon his extensive background in labor to turn obstacles into opportunities for NFFE and all of its members.

Griffin was first introduced to organized labor as a youth raised in Mooresville, NC. A small, southern town sustained by textile mills, Mooresville was populated by hard-working laborers who hastily learned that they could take no refuge with labor unions without fear of prompt retaliation or termination.

At fifteen, Griffin came to understand firsthand the hostility with which most business owners in his community viewed organized labor. Working part-time on the weekends for a local seafood restaurant, he and some colleagues attended a meeting after work hosted by a representative from the Bartenders, Waitresses and Busboys' Association. When Griffin arrived the next day for his shift, he and everyone who attended the meeting of the previous night were immediately fired.

Stinging from his unfair termination, Griffin began voraciously researching labor unions and the history of organized labor. In 1982, he joined his first union, the Association of Boilermakers, and has since served in virtually every position at the Local level.

"I learned the importance of organized labor at a young age," said Griffin. "I know that unions have the power to change lives. I've always wanted to be a part of a process that makes hard-working peoples' lives better."

As a graduate of Trident Technical College, certified in metallurgical processes and procedures, and the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, licensed in nuclear repair and refueling, Griffin began his career in the federal government working on nuclear submarines.

For almost 20 years he continued this work, serving at the Trident Refit Facility in Kings Bay, GA, maintaining Ohio Class nuclear submarines.

Prior to his appointment at NFFE, Griffin honed his negotiation and arbitration skills as a District Vice-President for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. He has continued to build upon these skills for the past eight years, successfully championing the rights of NFFE-IAM members in a variety of forums. He takes pride in his ability to bring labor and management to the table at every level to work through complex issues, often eliminating the need for third-party assistance.

While Griffin has played a key role in organizing many new units within the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense and the U.S. Forest Service, until now his work in organizing has remained secondary. With NFFE's new Organizing Strategic Plan, however, Griffin's role in this capacity will take center stage. As a National Organizer, he will now work with the rest



of NFFE's energized organizing team to actively recruit new members and broaden our union's scope.

Perhaps his most challenging assignment yet, Griffin believes it will be his most rewarding:

"Organizing is the lifeblood of our existence. I couldn't be happier to be a part of NFFE's new strategic plan. I look forward to getting out in the field and working on every aspect of our organizing model. I see great things happening in the future."

As NFFE pushes to expand its influence and better represent its members, Griffin will undoubtedly continue to seek out new challenges and further explore his passion for organized labor.

Griffin visiting with members of NFFE Local 1953 at Barksdale Air Force Base in Shreveport, LA.



Legislative Conference 2011 on the Horizon

As federal workers continue to be unfairly targeted by numerous misguided attempts to reduce the deficit, it is more critical than ever for NFFE-IAM members to participate in this year's Legislative Conference. Legislation targeting federal employee pay, benefits, and job security are certain to be introduced in the 112th Congress, and we need your help to stop it.

Legislative Conference, also known as Lobby Week, has seen members from across the country travel to our nation's capitol to meet with elected officials and demand that their collective voice be heard. Victories such as the repeal of the National Security Personnel System and the passage of the FERS sick leave benefit illustrate the power of federal workers to stand together and affect change.

NFFE National President William R. Dougan is encouraging as many members as possible to attend this year's Legislative Conference. With a hostile political climate on the horizon, it is more important than ever for federal employees to get together and fight for their well-being.

"There has been no more important time in recent years for our members to come to the nation's capital and make their views known to Congress," said Dougan. "If we don't stop the misinformation about federal workers swirling around Capitol Hill now, it will be a very tough year."

It's not too early to begin preparations to attend the 2011 Legislative Conference. The NFFE-IAM Legislative Conference will be held Monday, May 9 through Thursday, May 12 in Washington, D.C. Begin looking for more information on the 2011 Legislative Conference as the kick-off grows nearer.

"We need to hold our elected officials accountable for their votes and for their attitudes," said Dougan. "Congress needs to hear that federal employees are sick and tired of being political punching bags and having their commitment and dedication to serving the people of this nation questioned. It's time to set the record straight."

For those Locals who excelled at recruiting new members in 2010, the NFFE National Office will send one delegate from each of the top five Locals with the greatest percentage increase in density to the 2011 conference. Winners will have expenses paid for one week including hotel, airfare, and per diem.

**What:
Legislative
Conference 2011**

**When:
May 9-May 12, 2011**

**Where:
Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill
Washington, D.C.**

**For more information on
Legislative Conference, go
to www.nffe.org and click
'Lobby Week 2011' under
the Legislative tab.**

THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEE



William D. Fenaughty
National
Secretary-Treasurer

Writers/Editors
Jai Atkins
Amy Burns
Cory Bythrow
Randy Erwin
Cassie Kerner
Brittany Paull

William R. Dougan
National President

National Vice Presidents

Rob Arnold
Jozef Drozdowski
Patricia La Sala
Kolleen McGrath
John R. Obst
Tim Ostrowski
Debbie Ransom

James N. Davis
Assistant Directing
Business Representative



**National Federation of
Federal Employees**
805 15th Street, NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
202-216-4420
202-898-1861 Fax