

THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEE

FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

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

A New Way Forward



Organizing & Recruiting Strategic Plan

NFFE Initiates Fundamental Change to Organizing Model as Union Embraces 2012 Organizing and Recruiting Strategic Plan. See pages 7-9



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William R. Dougan

We are in a time of unprecedented turmoil in this country. The debt crisis continues to threaten the financial solvency of our nation while the inability of Congress to work together to address this issue continues to place federal employees and the agencies they work for in harm's way.

In particular, federal workers have become the focus of attention for the media and Congress. We have unjustly become the poster child for "big government" and are seen by some as a major contributor to, and cause of, the national debt. As a result, there have been continuing attempts to balance budgets and shrink the debt ceiling on the backs of federal workers. Attacks on our pay and benefits are a daily occurrence in the press and on the floor of the House and Senate. With agencies facing the inevitability of reduced budgets, the workforce is likely to lose thousands of jobs over the coming years. To top it all off, hundreds of thousands of your colleagues will retire over the next five years.

Organized labor in this country is under attack as well. These attacks have come at the very core of what it means to be a union – our right to collectively bargain. What started in Madison, Wisconsin has spread across this country as state governors and legislatures seek to vilify labor as the cause of their fiscal woes and make us pay through stripping our rights to bargain on behalf of the working men and women we represent. There are many who see this as an opportunity to permanently put employee unions out of business.

This is the landscape we find ourselves in – an environment in which we must continue to build membership and work

for change or have our rights trampled. The easy path would be for us to become discouraged, hang our heads, and give up. But that is not what we are about, and that is not who we are. That is not our proud history. At this moment in time, when the very worth and dignity in being an American worker is being called into question, we must continue to build membership and organize the unorganized. Our union's very survival depends on our ability to grow and mentor future leaders. If we are unable or unwilling to grow, we will soon be out of business.

NFFE's new Organizing and Recruiting Strategic Plan recognizes NFFE's need to move from *reacting* to change to *acting* on change. To accomplish this will necessitate a fundamental shift in our thinking, requiring us to move from a "servicing model" to an "organizing model." This is *not* about emphasizing building membership at the expense of servicing our members; it *is* about building highly-functioning locals, effective local leaders, and engaged members. It *is* fundamentally about gaining power for workers.

Building, supporting, and sustaining effective locals and councils is the only way we can be successful at building membership on a continuing basis. Collectively we all have a personal responsibility for the success or failure of our union. Change will not happen overnight. But we must commit to begin this change if we are to sustain this union. Working together, this is our chance to build something greater than ourselves, and continue NFFE's proud legacy of working for America every day.

FROM THE DESK OF THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

As the holiday season comes to a close, I have a full heart from all of the wonderful gifts received throughout this year and bygone years, including my health, faith, and family. Included in these gifts is my NFFE family and how they have grown! Given all the obstacles and barriers currently in place, our great union has endured. I'm proud to say that NFFE has seen great strides in membership growth since the inception of the Organizing Strategic Plan in September 2010. The Plan has provided for more accountability, resulting in more effective structure and planning for both organizing and recruiting drives. The congratulations for this amazing accomplishment goes in large part to all the locals, officers, stewards, and members who helped grow NFFE locals and councils across all our bargaining units in the agencies NFFE represents workers.

A special thanks needs to go to National Organizing Coordinators Cassie Kerner Bond and Brittany Paull, and National

Business Representative/Organizers John Griffin and Roosevelt Littlejohn. As a team, they are responsible for coordinating organizing and recruiting drives for new and established units throughout NFFE. They, with support from other NFFE staff, have all done a wonderful job of assisting locals and councils in growing our membership. We all work every day to grow our union so we have a stronger voice on Capitol Hill and with your agency.

Organizing continues to be the number one priority for our union, and with all of your help we are achieving our goal of growing NFFE. However, we must continue to organize new units and recruit new members in our existing units. Together, we can continue to grow and prosper as a union.

Finance Director Omar Arnold and I hope you all had a very happy and fulfilling holiday season. God bless you all!



William D. Fenaughty

FROM THE DESK OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

I am happy to report that I recently celebrated my second anniversary as NFFE's general counsel. I have greatly enjoyed meeting and working with the many fine unionists who are dedicated to representing our members.

One of the main responsibilities we have as a union is to negotiate strong collective bargaining agreements on behalf of our members and to enter into bargaining at times when it will be favorable to the employees. With an administration that has encouraged labor forums and fostered a productive labor relations atmosphere – through appointments to the Federal Service Impasse Panel and the Federal Labor Relations Authority, among other things – this is one of those times. I have been pleased at how active NFFE has been in this regard, at both the council and local levels.

The NFFE Forest Service Council finished bargaining its master agreement at

the end of 2010 and the NFFE Veterans Affairs Council wrapped up negotiations on collective bargaining agreements in the summer of 2011. The NFFE General Services Administration Council just submitted its opening proposals for a new collective bargaining agreement as well. At the local level, Local 1450 wrapped up bargaining in June of this year. Local 1153 is just finishing up its agreement. Local 1887 signed its agreement this December, and Local 405 is finishing up an agreement to cover its dredge boat unit. Meanwhile Locals 479, 1214, and 1752 continue to bargain on new agreements. Other NFFE units, such as Locals 2109 and 2189, made strategic decisions to roll over their collective bargaining agreements (CBA).

I urge all of our councils and locals to evaluate whether it is an opportune time to open up their respective CBAs. The NFFE National Office will assist you in any way possible. I congratulate all of our locals on the good work accomplished this year.



Stefan Sutich



Randy Erwin

FROM THE DESK OF THE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

For months I've been talking about the attacks federal workers could expect from Congress this year, especially those coming from the Republican-controlled U.S. House of Representatives. Well, those attacks have arrived in full force.

On December 13th, the House, on a mostly party-line vote, passed H.R. 3630, a bill that would pay for the extension of a middle class tax credit by freezing federal pay for a third consecutive year and decimating the value of federal workers' pensions.

House Republicans refused proposals to levy a very small tax on the highest paid Americans – just millionaires and billionaires – to pay for the middle class tax credit. The GOP preferred to single out middle class federal workers again to pay for the measure.

Federal workers have already made great sacrifices to ease the burden of our national debt. Federal employees accepted a two-year pay freeze that will reduce the federal deficit by \$60 billion over ten years. Federal workers are also deeply impacted by major cuts that have

LEGISLATIVE

Bill to Freeze Federal Pay, Slash Workforce, Gets Soundly Defeated as Federal Unions Press Senate

Just a few short weeks before Congress left Washington for the holidays, a flurry of activity in the federal labor community began as reports emerged that Republicans in the U.S. Senate would introduce a bill to pay for the extension of the payroll tax cut by freezing federal pay and reducing the workforce. On December 1st that proposal, formally introduced as S. 1931, came sharply into focus.

The bill, introduced by freshman Republican Senator Dean Heller of Nevada, proposed funding the popular payroll tax cut extension with an additional three-year freeze on federal salaries and a 200,000-job reduction of the federal workforce. This prompted a rapid and organized response from federal worker unions demanding that the draconian measure be defeated. NFFE was one of the first to release a statement opposing the bill, followed by letters and statements from groups like the Federal Workers Alliance and Federal-Postal Coalition – two coalitions of which NFFE is a member.

“The federal labor community mobilized immediately to kill this unreasonable legislation, and I believe that was the determining factor in the overwhelming defeat of the bill,” said NFFE National President William R. Dougan.

In an uncharacteristically swift legislative maneuver, the bill was brought up for a vote by the full Senate just days after it was introduced. Late into the evening, the vote came back 20-78 against the bill, representing a huge victory for federal employees after what had been two days of intense legislative and political action.

“Federal employees didn't just dodge a bullet on this one; they got active and made their voice heard on this issue,” said Dougan. “This is just one example of how powerful federal employees are when they get together and stand up for themselves.”

been made to the federal budget – about \$2 trillion over the next decade. These budget cuts will undoubtedly cost thousands of federal workers their jobs and do irreparable damage to their agencies' missions.

Meanwhile, the wealthiest Americans have seen no change in policy whatsoever that would compel them to contribute a little more to our national budget problem as the rest of America struggles.

Despite the sacrifices already made by federal employees, to Republicans in

Congress, asking the wealthiest 1% of Americans to contribute anything is out of the question when federal employees still have pay to cut, jobs to slash, and pensions to be raided.

As of this writing, H.R. 3630 has been referred to the U.S. Senate, where NFFE, IAM, and other unions representing federal employees are working to get these harmful anti-federal employee provisions out of the bill. President Obama has also threatened to veto this legislation if it is sent to his desk.

As 2012 gets underway, federal workers are sure to see attacks against them intensify.

Get ready. Get geared up for a fight. Those in Congress who are targeting federal workers will never be satisfied no matter how much they take from dedicated federal employees.

For the sake of our families and our communities, we must win these battles on Capitol Hill. Please make sure you are doing your part in 2012 to help protect federal workers from these attacks.

Super Committee Fails to Reach a Deal on Deficit Reduction, Major Fallout for Federal Workers Expected

On November 21st, the Congressional Super Committee, a bipartisan group of 12 legislators tasked with finding \$1.2 trillion in spending reductions by November 23rd, officially threw in the towel.

The results of their decision – or rather, the lack thereof – will have serious consequences for federal employees in the coming years. Without a deal to reduce deficits, the federal budget will now be subject to an automatic cut of roughly \$1 trillion from federal agency budgets over the next decade. This automatic cut, known in Washington-speak as “sequestration,” will require half of the cuts to be made in domestic programs and the other half in the Department of Defense (DoD), starting January 1, 2013. Keep in mind that these cuts are coming on the heels of the \$1 trillion that was already cut as part of the recent deal to raise the national debt limit.

“These cuts are totally unsustainable,” said NFFE National President William R. Dougan. “There is no way federal agencies can sacrifice trillions in funding and continue to deliver quality services to the American people – the math simply doesn’t add up.”

The results of these massive spending cuts will be deeper than any the federal workforce has experienced in our lifetimes. VSIPs, VERAs, furloughs, and even workforce reductions will be the new

norm at many resource-starved federal agencies. Cutting a total of \$2 trillion from the budget over the next ten years will be nearly impossible without dramatically reshaping the size, composition, and role of the federal workforce. Without the people or resources to carry out their missions, key services will be diminished, delayed, or outright denied to the public who have come to rely on them.

“The failure of our elected representatives to come to an agreement and prevent draconian agency budgets cuts is simply a disgrace,” said Dougan. “The American people sent them to office to deliver solutions, not to engage in more of the same partisan grandstanding and obstinacy. Now the costs of their unyieldingness will fall squarely on the backs of federal workers and the public whom they serve. This is shameful.”

NFFE will continue to fight to prevent federal workers from bearing the brunt of Congress’ failure to reach a responsible deal. NFFE and our brothers and sisters in labor are working together closer than ever before to defend the rights of hardworking, middle class federal employees. To do your part in this fight, visit our ‘Legislative Action Center’ and contact your members of Congress today!

Attention NFFE Locals: The 2012 Campaign Season has Begun and It's Time to Get Politically Active

As we enter 2012, we are beginning perhaps the most important election season in the history of the federal government. The stakes could not be any higher for federal employees this November. If control of the Senate and White House changes hands, federal workers are virtually certain to see draconian cuts to federal agency budgets, which will eliminate hundreds of thousands of federal jobs. Federal workers are also likely to see targeted cuts to their pay and retirement security.

With the stakes so high, it is critical that every NFFE local become engaged politically. The way NFFE locals get engaged politically is to 1) establish a local committee that coordinates political and legislative activity, 2) participate in your local State Council of Machinists, 3) contribute to the Machinists Non-partisan Political

League (MNPL), and 4) participate in AFL-CIO State Federations and Central Labor Councils.

Establishing a political and legislative committee is probably the most important step in getting your local engaged politically. It is crucial to have several members focusing on engaging and coordinating political and legislative activities for the local. Members of these local committees might set up meetings for a group of local members to meet with Congressional offices in their districts. They might give updates to members about key issues on Capitol Hill at union meetings. They might pass along information to members about how to volunteer for election leafleting, phone banking, and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts. These are just a few examples of the many important

things that can be done at the local level with an engaged political and legislative committee. If your local doesn't have one currently, please consider establishing one soon.

The next thing NFFE locals can do to get engaged is to participate in the State Councils of Machinists, which make up the political infrastructure of our union. These councils consist of local union officials who meet periodically with other IAM and NFFE-IAM members from their state to make decisions about state and local political campaigns and take action on key issues. State Councils of Machinists make decisions about which politicians to endorse or oppose based on their voting records. As a union, we support candidates who stand strong for working people – including federal workers – and

Members of NFFE Local 178 and certain national office staff attended the Maryland-D.C. State Council of Machinists in July.





National Vice President and Local 2109 President Timothy Ostrowski works closely with his local congressman, Representative Paul Tonko (D-NY), through the Capital District Area Labor Federation.



we oppose those who don't. State Councils also meet directly with candidates and coordinate leafleting and GOTV efforts on Election Day. The Councils also pool information to make sure union members are educated about the issues that impact our jobs, our families, and our communities.

It is critical that NFFE locals participate in their State Councils because the issues that concern our members – federal employees – are often different than issues impacting workers employed in other sectors. For NFFE-IAM members to have a voice in the political process through their union, all NFFE locals must be participating. According to the IAM Constitution, all IAM locals, including NFFE locals, are required to join and participate in their State Council of Machinists. If your local has not been doing so, make sure your local starts to as soon as possible. The State Councils are invaluable tools of which NFFE locals must take advantage.

While there are many NFFE locals that have yet to get active in their State Council of Machinists, several NFFE locals have been participating for years. NFFE National Business Representative Roosevelt Littlejohn serves as a representative of NFFE Local 2 to the Maryland-D.C. State Council of Machinists. Here's how he describes the value State Councils provide:

"I have been in several labor organizations over the last 30 years, and I've seen many different political organizations, and none that I've seen have been as powerful or influential as the State Councils of Machinists. Acting collectively gives IAM locals a collective voice to bring their issues forward on a larger scale. When we act collectively we have more power."

The Machinists Non-partisan Political League (MNPL) is the political arm of the IAM. It was created in 1947 to allow our union's members to gather individual contributions, coordinate political activity, and elect candidates who support working families. Candidates we support know that the MNPL stands for economic justice, security in the workplace, and equality for every member. Contributing to MNPL is the key to opening doors for NFFE on Capitol Hill. The suggested MNPL contribution for each NFFE-IAM member is \$25 per year. Please make sure members at your local are educated about MNPL. If you have not done so yet, please make your annual contribution today.

AFL-CIO State Federations and Central Labor Councils (CLCs) are state and local union movements. These organizations are composed of several unions, not just the IAM. State federations tend to focus on state legislative lobbying and elections, while CLCs tend to focus on county or city lobbying and elections. For major elections, like during presidential election

years, the state federations and CLCs organize massive coordinated campaigns to educate and turn out union members and their families on Election Day. Perhaps the biggest value that AFL-CIO State Federations and CLCs provide is solidarity and support from the local labor community that proves extremely useful when a local union needs to flex their political muscle to get results from lawmakers.

NFFE Local 2109 has been participating in the Capitol District Area Labor Federation in upstate New York for years. Here's how Local 2109 President Tim Ostrowski describes the value of participating:

"We have a monthly labor breakfast, and local politicians like U.S. Representative Paul Tonko (D-NY) make it a point to be there every month. Everyone who is an elected official gets recognized at that meeting. That's where we really build relationships with these guys. The elected folks always come and speak with myself and other local members. Without participating in the Labor Federation our local would be on the outside looking in. Elected officials might not even know the Watervliet Arsenal exists. But when we participate in the Labor Federation, when we care enough to participate and support them, then they turn around and support us. It's as simple as that."



NFFE's national elected officers and council officers joined some local presidents and NFFE staff this October to develop NFFE's new Organizing and Recruiting Strategic Plan.

The NFFE National Office is very excited to announce the release of the 2012 Organizing and Recruiting Strategic Plan. This new organizing plan builds upon the successes of previous versions and makes important changes that are necessary to build a stronger, better union for tomorrow. Membership is the heart of our union; without it, we would not be able to survive. With every additional member, we become stronger and better able to serve you.

The role of the NFFE National Office is to engage people at every level to be proactive in recruiting and organizing. In our new plan, we focus on helping locals shift toward a new way of doing business, known as the organizing model. This model focuses on what we can all do col-

lectively. While the updated plan is not a detailed instruction manual, it does offer critical information about the essential resources and communication tools you need to organize effectively.

NFFE National understands that organizing takes a significant amount of time and resources. Recognizing this, we have decided to continue reimbursing locals \$100 for each new member recruited. This will also allow you to build up your local treasury and have extra cash on hand for arbitrations, negotiations, and sending delegates to the annual Legislative Conference and NFFE's quadrennial National Convention, to name a few.

Please be aware that there is one very important change regarding our reimburse-

ment policy. Starting January 1, 2012, the NFFE National Office must have a current bargaining unit list on file for your local, which includes the new member(s) being submitted, in order to participate in the program. In order to ensure that we are submitting and processing valid new members, your local will not receive reimbursement for your submitted 1187 forms until we receive a copy of your up-to-date bargaining unit list.

The Legislative Conference trips will also be awarded again this year. Five locals will win a free trip to the 2012 IAM Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. The two locals with the greatest number of new members signed up during the previous year (as indicated by properly filled out 1187 forms), and the three locals

with the greatest increase in membership density (as indicated by remittance reports and bargaining unit lists), will win the trips each year. The NFFE National Office will pick up hotel, travel expenses, and per diem for one representative from each of the winning locals. Due to the desire to make this reward available to as many locals as possible, the same local may not win for two consecutive years. The same local also may not receive multiple trips for winning in both the total number and density categories.

The updated plan also puts in place a new tool for evaluating a local's effectiveness. Evaluating effectiveness is crucial to knowing what is working and what is not, allowing us to make necessary changes so that we are successful at every level. Locals will be placed in one of five categories based on their membership, interactions with their appropriate national organizing coordinator (NOC), business representative (BR), and other criteria that is shared with the NFFE National Office. Please review the full Organizing and Recruiting Strategic Plan for complete details.

The revised plan also places a new and important emphasis on engaging younger workers. A significant portion of the federal workforce will be eligible to retire within the next few years. These workers make up a significant portion of our locals' elected officers and members. It is imperative that we embrace young workers into our union and pass our knowledge from one generation to the next, or risk that knowledge walking out the door.

Engaging younger workers is crucial, but it also requires thinking about recruiting in a new way. Younger employees are less likely than their predecessors to have grown up in a union household, or to have learned about unions in school, so they will likely need a comprehensive education about the benefits of union representation. They are also probably more comfortable and reliant on technology than previous generations, so locals will need to find ways to embrace these trends when trying to engage new members. Creating local websites, electronic newsletters, and Facebook pages are some ideas that may prove helpful in recruiting young workers.

Our previous plans contained many components that have worked well, and many of these remain in the new plan.

NFFE locals will still have full access to NFFE's organizing department to assist with recruiting and organizing needs. National business representatives/organizers will assess potential organizing leads, recommend organizing targets, and plan and execute organizing campaigns. The national organizing coordinators (NOC) will work with existing locals, providing them with the tools and resources they need to be successful recruiters, and assisting with recruiting campaigns as needed. They will also track national membership data and recruiting trends. Together, NFFE's organizing department ensures that information and organizing assistance

is made available to every member and potential member who seeks it.

The NFFE National Office will also continue to provide supplies to assist locals in their recruiting efforts. New member and recruitment kits, membership cards, and welcome letters are all available to locals free of charge. Welcome letters are sent out to new members directly each month, and membership cards are printed quarterly for the members signed up during the previous three months and mailed to the local. It is the local officers' responsibility to sign and distribute the cards. Kits are available any time, but must be requested from the local's NOC.

In addition to these items, there are a number of brochures, flyers, and posters





Local 2109 has used the organizing model for years, empowering members to start websites, sponsor recruiting drives, and engage management in service projects, as seen above.

available to aid locals with their recruiting efforts. These range from brochures on NFFE's benefits, to helpful hints on how to talk to a prospective member. Many of these items are available for download from the NFFE website, www.nffe.org. Copies can also be printed and mailed directly to any local. In addition, we are happy to customize any of these items for a specific local or to create something new if we don't already have what is needed. Locals can contact their NOC any time to request these items or talk about their unique needs.

The last few years have seen great organizing and recruiting success for NFFE. Although the labor movement continues to face some significant challenges, this plan has put the pieces in place for us to achieve great things in the coming years.

The support for NFFE's organizing strategy at the local and council level has been tremendous, and it is thanks to all of your hard work that so many new members are becoming a part of our NFFE family. We look forward to continuing to work with you, and helping you put the framework

in place to become even more effective recruiters. Please take the time to read the updated Organizing and Recruiting Strategic Plan, and work with your NOC to develop a recruiting strategy tailored to your local.

Together we will ensure that NFFE continues to build upon our proud tradition of giving a voice to federal employees and improving the quality of life for working men and women everywhere.

Enter Your Richard N. Brown Memorial Scholarship Application Today!

NFFE is proud to announce that applications for the 2012-2013 Richard N. Brown Memorial Scholarship competition are now available! Two \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to NFFE members or family of NFFE members in good standing who demonstrate academic excellence in their chosen field of study.

To enter, submit a completed application package postmarked no later than March 30, 2012. Submitting an application will also automatically register applicants for hundreds of additional scholarships from our partners at the Federal Employees Education and Assistance Fund (FEEA). Printable scholarship application, submission, and eligibility requirements can be found on FEEA's website, at www.feea.org.

President Dougan Praises Achievements of Labor Management Forums in Congressional Testimony

Initiated by President Obama's Executive Order 13522 in December of 2009, the process of building labor-management partnerships at agencies throughout government has proven a resounding success. This October, nearly two years after the executive order was issued, National President Dougan testified on these forums' achievements before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia.

Emphasizing the importance of these forums during lean budget times, Dougan told the committee how forums across the country are already saving money and

improving labor-management relations, making the policy a win-win proposition for taxpayers.

"The reestablishment of labor-management forums has been a breath of fresh air in a majority of agencies where forums are established," said Dougan. "In these agencies, forums are being used to facilitate smarter, leaner, and more efficient government by including some of the most important stakeholders of all – the employees who actually carry out the missions of the agencies."

One of the many benefits of these forums, Dougan explained, is their ability to ad-

dress workplace issues before they turn into problems. With forums in place, agency management is no longer left to guess what impact new policies will have on their employees. With a formal, mutually agreeable forum in place, potentially expensive wrinkles can be ironed out beforehand, saving taxpayer dollars and improving delivery of government services.

"You've heard the saying, 'An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,'" said Dougan. "The same concept applies to labor-management relations. Labor-management forums are very effective at preventing far greater costs agencies may incur by not involving employees."

President Obama Reauthorizes Labor Management Partnership Executive Order

With talks of federal pay freezes, workforce reductions, and retirement cuts swirling around Washington, D.C. in recent months, federal workers and managers had little to give thanks for this holiday. They did receive an early gift, however, when President Obama recently announced his reauthorization of a 2009 executive order calling for labor-management partnerships throughout the government.

This November, the President Obama announced that the labor-management partnership order would be extended through September of 2013, at which time it will need to be reauthorized to continue its work. With much of the housekeeping work of establishing and manning these forums complete at most

federal workplaces, the real work of improving labor-management relations and identifying savings for the taxpayers can enter full-swing.

"We are pleased that President Obama has chosen to extend this invaluable forum for federal workers and managers,"

said NFFE National President William R. Dougan, who sits on the National Council of Federal Labor Management Relations. "This good-government policy has made great progress in ushering in a new culture of cooperation in the federal workforce. Its extension will ensure that yet more progress will be made for workers, managers, and taxpayers."

National President William R. Dougan meets with Senate Subcommittee Chairman Daniel Akaka (D-HI) following a recent hearing on partnership forums.



Federal Retirees to See First COLA Increase in Two Years

For the first time in two years, our nation's 1.9 million retired civil service employees will receive a cost of living adjustment. Consistent with the release of September's Consumer Price Index figures, most federal retirees will receive a COLA of 3.6%.

After two years of deflationary pressure resulting from the recession, Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS)

annuitants will see their first adjustment since 2009. CSRS annuitants, who make up roughly 80% of the civil service retiree community, will receive the full 3.6% adjustment while FERS annuitants can expect an adjustment of 2.6%.

According to a recent Congressional Research Service report cited in the *Washington Post*, the average monthly benefit for CSRS and FERS annuitants stands

at \$2,899 and \$1,051, respectively. Effective on January 1, 2012 the average CSRS annuitant will receive a \$104 monthly increase and FERS annuitants will see \$27 increase to monthly payouts.

"It's about time federal retirees got the COLA adjustment they deserve," said NFFE Legislative Director Randy Erwin. "This was long overdue."

Public-Private Pay Gap Grows to 26.3 Percent as Pay Freeze Looms Large

In early November, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) discussed its annual National Compensation Survey with members of the Federal Salary Council. At the meeting, BLS announced that the pay difference between public and private sector workers – commonly referred to as the public-private pay gap – reached a whopping 26.3%. This represents an increase of more than two percent over last year's mark.

The reason for this sharp increase is that federal workers are enduring the first year of a two-year pay freeze. Whereas private sector salaries have risen over the past year, federal salaries have remained flat.

Regardless, Republicans in Congress and conservatives in the media continue to make the bogus claim that federal workers are overpaid. Despite the evidence to the contrary, measures to freeze or reduce federal pay and benefits continue to receive serious consideration in Congress.

"Official government figures unequivocally show that federal employees make 26.3% less than workers performing similar work in the private sector," said NFFE Legislative Director Randy Erwin. "Bringing federal pay and benefit practices more in line with the private sector would in fact require a hefty pay increase for federal workers. Federal workers do their part to keep the federal budget down every day when they accept substantially less compensation to do the same work as their counterparts in the private sector."

NFFE will continue to fight misguided attempts to target federal employee pay in the newspaper, on the airwaves, and in the halls of Congress.

United We Serve: Reconnecting with Our Communities

The labor movement has a long and proud tradition of community service. Well before we won a seat at the negotiation table, unions made it a priority to care for their sick and wounded, provide for the families of injured workers, and establish vibrant communities. Each day unionists continue to express these sentiments of solidarity, not only in the workplace, but in their communities by donating their time and resources to strengthen their neighborhoods, cities, and states.

This December, members of NFFE's National Office exercised this spirit of solidarity by establishing a day of service to re-connect with the community and give back to those in need. At Food and Friends, a non-profit dedicated to providing nutritious meals and friendship to people living with life-threatening illness, NFFE's staff worked together to assemble

groceries for patients living in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

President William R. Dougan remarked, "I'm constantly hearing from union brothers and sisters who generously give of themselves to serve their communities. This holiday season I felt it was important to demonstrate just how critical community service is to the labor movement by working with my staff to give back."

Although unions, and federal employees in particular, remain the unfair target of political attacks in the media, we have the opportunity to reclaim our reputations by illustrating the true essence of the labor movement and serving our communities.

Unfortunately, all too often union members' dedication to the community goes

unnoticed. By taking a few simple steps to get the word out about your local's service, NFFE-IAM members can take a step toward improving the public's perception of organized labor as well as fostering growth and increasing solidarity.

If you, your local, or your council is interested in learning more about taking an active role in the community, please visit NFFE's new 'Service Toolkit' located in the 'NFFE Toolbox' at www.nffe.org.

In these difficult times, it is imperative that our members reflect on the true essence of unionism – solidarity. We must all stay resolute in our commitment to stick together to create positive change within our union, our communities, and our country.



Top Recruiters Enter the Spotlight With Monthly Organizing Awards

The NFFE National Office would like to recognize a few locals that have made significant strides in recruiting in the past several months. Since October of 2011, we have been honoring locals each month based on the number of new members signed up. This is calculated by counting the number of signed and completed 1187s that the NFFE National Office receives within that calendar month. The top three locals receive a gold, silver, or bronze certificate and a letter of appreciation from NFFE's national president and national secretary-treasurer.

One specific local that has made tremendous strides in recruiting is Local 387, which represents employees at the Northport VA Medical Center in Northport, New York. These hard-working men and women have added over 30 new members in just a short period of time. This was achieved by the local leadership getting out and talking face-to-face with members and potential members.

"Recruiting does not just happen one week a year during a recruiting drive," said Rick Walters, who is a registered nurse and one of the local's trustees. "It is important to show an interest in your members and make them a top priority. I try to get out and talk to members at least once a week. When I walk around I have my pockets stuffed full of NFFE trinkets to pass out and always make sure to have 1187s on hand. It is important to leave a tangible reminder of the union's presence in the workplace."

An added benefit that Local 387 uses is the \$100 incentive, which is the reimbursement paid out to NFFE locals for every 1187 form that is submitted to the NFFE National Office. The local gives half of that money to the new member to thank them for their membership and offset the cost of the first month's dues.

The local has also increased its visibility around the center by using NFFE fliers and signs, sending out Christmas cards to all of its members, and recognizing members on their birthdays with a card and a lottery ticket as a token of appreciation for their membership.



Members of NFFE Local 387 at the Northport VA Medical Center in New York have made exponential increases in new members this year.

Locals who have also been awarded for their extraordinary efforts in recruiting over the past several months are Local 2189 at the Red River Army Depot in Texarkana, Texas; Local 178 at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Aberdeen, Maryland; Local 2102 at the Atlanta VA Medical Center, Atlanta, Georgia; Local 2058 at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Aberdeen, Maryland; and Local 1919 at Camp Pendleton, San Diego County, California.

We appreciate the hard work from these and many other locals in recent months. We look forward to continuing to work with you to make recruiting a priority within our union.

Reminder: NFFE National Convention Happening This Year!

With less than a year remaining until the 49th NFFE National Convention, it is time for NFFE locals to start making plans to attend.

The next convention will be held from October 1-4, 2012 at the Benson Hotel in Portland, Oregon. NFFE's National Convention is a great opportunity for NFFE-IAM members throughout the country to network, learn about the union, and share your voice in how our organization is run. Convention documents will be included with the official convention call packet which will be mailed to all NFFE locals in January of this year.

Start making plans now so that your local can be a part of NFFE's 49th National Convention. For more information on Convention, including online hotel booking, click on 'NFFE Convention 2012' under the 'Resources' tab at www.nffe.org.

On the Road with Roosevelt Littlejohn

Don't be fooled by Roosevelt Littlejohn's nickname – "Rosie" is an imposing force and so is his commitment to fighting for working families. Coming to NFFE after years of working with the IAM, Littlejohn joined our union in June of 2010 as a national business representative/organizer servicing the capital region. Since then he has utilized both his signature patience and tenacity to strengthen NFFE's foundation and extend its network.

A correctional officer with the Washington, D.C. Department of Corrections by training, Littlejohn served as a union official for the Fraternal Order of Police, AFGE, and the Teamsters before establishing his own independent union in 1996.

"As a correctional officer I quickly realized that my colleagues and I needed to have our voices heard by management," said Littlejohn. "I set out to build a representational infrastructure to ensure workers' issues could begin to be adequately addressed."

In 2000, Littlejohn made the decision to merge his correctional officer union, CE-1, into the International Association of Machinist's network of locals. Just four short years later, the IAM offered him a full-time position as a business representative assigned to service both CE-1 in Washington, D.C., and CE-2, another correctional officer local in New Jersey.

Now as one of two business representative/organizers with NFFE, Littlejohn is faced with a tremendous challenge.

"I've never worked in the public sector before. While it has been difficult to learn the intricacies of federal employee representation, I've been able to pick up a lot while I've been out in the field."



Not only is Littlejohn quickly learning the ropes at NFFE, he is also working hard to push our union's organizational boundaries by building new coalitions.

"I'm most excited by the prospect of signing new Service Contract Act groups," said Littlejohn. "Government contractors need representation too, and I know NFFE can provide them a great service once they are organized."

With Littlejohn as another notable addition to our team, NFFE is poised, now more than ever, to take on the challenges facing the federal workforce and better represent all of our dedicated members.



NFFE Recognized With Ten Awards in 2011 IAM Newsletter and Website Contest

This November, the IAM announced the winners of its 2011 Newsletter and Website Contest, an annual competition that recognizes excellence in print and digital union publications. Building on the past two years' stellar performances, NFFE locals and the national office again came out strong, winning a record total of ten awards across every category.

In the district websites category, the NFFE National Office won first place in both 'general excellence' and 'best layout and design' for our website, www.nffe.org. Among local websites, NFFE Local 2109 made an impressive second place showing in the 'General Excellence' category for its website, www.nffe.org/local2109. This is the second year in a row that Local 2109 has claimed the award.

In the district newsletter category, the NFFE National Office scored three more awards, with a first place finish in both 'general excellence' and 'best feature,' and a second place award for 'best layout and design.' More exciting was the judges reaction to two first-time entrants into the competition, NFFE Local 125 and NFFE Local 1450. In the local newsletters category, Local 125 locked in a third place finish in the 'Best Feature' category for their publication, *The 125 Post*. Local 1450 made a strong showing as well, receiving honorable mentions across each of the three categories for its publication, *Making It Happen!*

"We are so proud of all of the work that our locals have put in to improving communication with their members," said NFFE National President William R. Dougan. "It gives us all great pride to see our union honored with such prestigious awards. Congratulations to our winners, and keep up the great work."

You can view a complete list of 2011 IAM Newsletter and Website Contest winners at the IAM website, www.goiam.org. To learn more about what your local can do to start a newsletter, website, or generally improve your communications with membership, visit the 'Communicator's Toolkit' on our website, www.nffe.org.



THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEE



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National
Secretary-Treasurer

Writers/Editors
Cassie Kerner Bond
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Cory Bythrow
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Rob Arnold
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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